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Public Intellectuals: Styles, Publics, and Possibilities

By

Matthew D. Kay

Bachelor of Arts  
University of South Carolina, 2010

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Masters of Arts in

English

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Accepted by:

Pat Gehrke, Director of Thesis

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## Dedication

*For a start, and an encouragement to all foolish ruins playing with capes.*

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of my wonderful colleagues at the University of South Carolina for their peerless support and dedication. Each and every one of them has contributed to this in some form or fashion not the least of which include in no particular order: Jonathan Maricle, Mark Schaukowitch, Mary Fratini, Nathaniel Street, Grace Hagood, Trevor (Agon) Meyer, Anthony Stagliano, Justine Wells, David Stubblefield, Bhavin Tailor, Jonathan Brooks, Jesse Castillo, Erin Cromer, and L.B. Long whose laughter we sorely miss. Amongst the faculty I would like to thank Erik Doxtader, Byron Hawk, Jonathan Edwards, John Muckelbauer, Mindy Fenske, and Gina Ercolini for supporting me and my nonsense and for being the most tenacious of forces.

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And finally I would like to thank the Triforce. Andy, Sarah, and Laila you were the power, the wisdom, and the courage to see this through.

Shall we go then you and I?

## Abstract

The status of the public intellectual is debated continuously in the United States, but what is not up for debate or theoretical examination is how public intellectual practice is mediated between style and publics. To that end, this study examines three public intellectual figures: Saul Alinsky, Noam Chomsky, and Robert Reich. Each examination analyzes and describes particular public intellectual styles — performances of culture — which trace three dominant public intellectual practices. These styles contain, invite, and deploy certain publics to engage with the public intellectual and vice versa. First, the study is a theoretical engagement with public intellectual practice as a performance and embodiment as opposed to state of being or set identity. Second, it is a practical toolbox for theorists of publics, intellectuals, and public intellectuals, and any wishing to better understand the rhetorical interfaces — stylistically produced constructs that shut down, enable, or change the relationship between intellectual production and public discourse — that make for more nuanced public intellectual practice. Each rhetorical interface operates through tropes, common places in language around which thinking and action turn, such as faith, economy, democracy, freedom, truth, power, the public and fraud. With each come limits and possibilities not only for analysis but also for application. Rhetorical interfaces and the styles that mediate them draw together sets of practices that can, and have been taken up, in a variety of registers in and beyond the public intellectuals who best depict or inhabit them. For any intellectual production,

academic or otherwise, such a toolset is invaluable for making our labor count. Last, this study aims to place a relatively new set of scholarship, publics theory, in conversation with public intellectual practice and rhetorical theory. We then see amongst a plurality of style and deployment, a set of possibilities for engaging an increasingly multi-modal world.

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## CHAPTER 1

### *Introduction*

2011 marked the first meeting of the Society for U.S. Intellectual History (S-USIH), an interdisciplinary conglomerate focused on exploring the history, importance, and methods of American public intellectuals. The S-USIH is organized via a blog, “U.S. Intellectual History,” which I discovered whilst searching for some sign of life of the American public intellectual. I had heard of the public intellectual’s decline; I had heard its death knell from the academy and the pundits. Gone was the moral center of our society, drowned in a sea of anti-intellectualism and technocracy. Perhaps the good people at S-USIH had sensed my dismay and decided to form a war council.

However, upon entering the blog I discovered no talk of decline, or at least not of imminent decline. Instead, academics and non-academics alike were tackling not only what a public intellectual is, but citing various instances of public intellectual activity within recent memory. The conference was covered by an equally surprised Ph.D. candidate in history at Syracuse University by the name of Jonathan Wilson, who wrote “the Conference on Public Intellectuals stirred up all sorts of unusually interesting side questions. I, for one, was unsettled by the fact that only two presenters discussed topics earlier than the 20<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>1</sup> This brand new conference, covered by a fresh Ph.D. candidate, held at Harvard<sup>2</sup> does not gel well with the image of tenured old men

lamenting the bygone days of that great American intellectual Ralph Waldo Emerson. Whether this conference is proof of resurgence, a sign that the American Intellectual has never gone away, or even the trumpet of its ascent, I cannot say for sure. What the S-USIH illustrates is at least a continued probing of the public intellectual's status in the United States. Whether on the rise or on the mend, the political landscape, academic circles, and coffee shop musings cannot seem to get past the unsettling question said in medicinal tones: how is the public intellectual doing?

As one can surmise from my expectations going into the S-USIH blog, decline of the public intellectual is a predominant view, be that a faltering in the number or the quality of public intellectuals in America. The amount of scholarship, news, and public eulogy over the American public intellectual's long funeral is legion. The most recent major work on the subject is by noted legal scholar (and self-proclaimed public intellectual) Richard Posner. The book *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline* focuses primarily on the lack of quality control in public intellectual practice. The distinction between a decline of quantity and quality is central for Posner, as the two not only posit different prescriptions for remedy, but also encourage different methods for analysis. That being said, Posner's book is perhaps the most notable in that it is the only study that I or Amitai Etzioni, recent editor of *Public Intellectuals: An Endangered Species?* can cite as using a strict quantitative study to figure an empirical decline. Posner's data traces well over five hundred public intellectuals (which Posner admits is a bit arbitrary) and ranks them according to number of electronic citations, print citations, and media mentions. Seeing a massive set of tables (numbering six hundred and seven public

intellectuals since its last update<sup>3</sup>), a reader would be inclined to think the number of public intellectuals is on the way to a meteoric rise, rivaling only reality television stars. However, the large swath of people that Posner includes despite much criticism of the work<sup>4</sup>, only adds to the sense of a decline in quality. The book is filled with tales of public intellectuals working against their academic work in favor of fame, laughable attempts at specialized academics speaking on general matters of public concern, and outright ideological slander in the name of swelling a movement or two.<sup>5</sup>

Posner's work is only the most recent in a long line of declinist musings. The most often cited, to use Posner's criteria, is Russell Jacoby. Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* dates the public intellectual's death to the 1950s, citing a cultural frontier being closed by nationalist dogma and anti-intellectual culture. This aligns with Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's famous essay "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," where the commodification of culture is theorized as the monolithic impediment to rigorous and nuanced intellectual production, leading eventually to a passive culture caught forever in capitalistic norms of consumption. We can hear a more modern echo of Horkheimer and Adorno's work in J. Hillis Miller when he critiques, along with Jon Katz, the "netizens of the new digital nation."<sup>6</sup> If the Culture Industry sounds frightening, it certainly cannot be helped by the still ongoing declinist conversation nor made less unsettling by Etzioni's dating of the decline to not only Jacoby's retroactive condemnation of the 1950s, but also to Donald Davie's bemoaning during the 1950s, "the professional poet

has already disappeared from the literary scene, and the professional man of letters is following him into the grave.”<sup>7</sup>

The trope of decline has a long history, one too long and expansive to survey here. The public intellectual’s supposed decline certainly does smell awfully familiar to every generational wailing about the good ol’ days or the oncoming storm of new technology, culture, etc. that will snuff out all that was good in the world. In a way that may seem to close down any conversation as to whether or not the public intellectual is in a state of decline or dead already. But chalking up the warnings and inquiries of Posner, Jacoby, and Davie to that same old song of the generation gap would be foolish, if not outright dangerous. Posner in particular demonstrates a rigor to his study that speaks to the seriousness of the subject, not to mention the vast amount of intellectual work Posner has produced over his lifetime, as well as his extensive legal career. Even beyond Posner’s credibility and self-association with public intellectuals, (after all he has written well over forty books on topics ranging from court appeals to democracy to sexuality,) his is one more expression of the need for an accounting of the public intellectual. Suffice it to say that as a group’s, community’s, or nation’s access to informed critique or knowledge lessens, so too does their ability to make healthy decisions. That being said, what gives the public intellectual a specific right to speak for intellectual depth is far from settled even amongst the prophets of decline. What credentials, occupations, products, and styles a person must take to don the mantle of public intellectual is fluid at best and outright nebulous at worst. To illustrate, let me throw out some names of contemporary public intellectuals: Noam Chomsky, Paul

Krugman, Jürgen Habermas, Paul Wolfowitz, Barack Obama, Elizabeth Warren, Ralph Nader, Robert Reich, Richard Rorty, Robert Putnam, Richard Posner, Christopher Hitchens, and Jared Diamond. This short list comprises judges, politicians, scientists, journalists, and academics including some that are combinations of those categories. Public intellectuals seem to refer to no specific occupation, though we can certainly draw some cursory similarities in terms of activity such as publication, engagement with the public, and credentials usually associated with the written word or speech as a vocational medium.

Publication is in a way the most pervasive association with public intellectuals. Intellectuals that have not produced publication are usually hard-up to get a job in any field, let alone the extra-territorial role of public intellectual. Even public intellectuals directly involved in politics through government posts (senators, white house officials, representatives, presidents, etc.) have at least one major publication under their belts, though this particular exception is being more and more reduced to an obligatory biographical book deal, particularly with presidents. It should not come as a surprise to anyone that given this publication measuring stick, typical conceptions of American public intellectuals involve the academy. Built into the very structural formations of the modern American university system is the necessity of publication for legitimacy and job access. But even beyond the ever-pressing demand at research universities for faculty to publish (and thus add to the prestige of the university in question) the academy is a place suited for intellectual pursuit. At the most basic level, a university's task is to be a breeding ground for intellectual production in all its forms. Universities have

increasingly moved towards pushing students through and out in order to “get the piece of paper.” That shift has not been met with complete resistance and has to a degree, lessened the natural association with the university to intellectual endeavor. Still, what the naturalized association between public intellectuals and the academy points us to is a central commitment to intellectual production, distinct but in relation to the public sphere.

What is the purpose of intellectual pursuit if not for its application to matters of human interest? Countless philosophers and scholars of every stripe have attempted to answer that question. That one should investigate business or get a degree in business in order to become a businessman seems logical enough, but it reduces intellectual pursuit to means and simultaneously bankrupts any mental work of impact if it cannot be directly traced to a specific institution. Thus the intellectual in the public intellectual is split from the beginning between an institutional accountability and a luxury. Perhaps that is why the public intellectual so perfectly eludes definition, especially in America where economic validity is an increasing concern of the public. That an intellectual, someone who is committed to intellectual endeavor for its own sake, might be demanded to do something with his or her knowledge is a logical conclusion.

That demand to do something is the focus of this study. Because public intellectuals are the products of demands, needs, and exigencies this study will fill a much needed gap in public intellectual theory, by focusing on the “how” rather than the “what.” How public intellectualism is performed may be perhaps a better question, if we wish to understand not only the competing concepts of public intellectuals, but avoid

damning the practice all together. It would of course be impossible to analyze how public intellectuals engage with and are engaged by publics without utilizing concepts that allow us to attend to the specifics of any given intellectual practice. For this reason we will be looking at three paradigmatic figures of American public intellectualism: Saul Alinsky, Noam Chomsky, and Robert Reich.

Each of these figures represents not necessarily dominant ideas of what the intellectual should be, but they do represent three dominant styles of how public intellectuals perform their role. Often-times we think of style as adornment, something we put on our truth or our message like clothing or spices in order to make it more easily received. Style as adornment is not entirely unfair, but what we mean by style is more than sugar on the bitter pill. Style, as we will see, is an aesthetic and rhetorical performance of culture, in this case the culture of the public intellectuals and their publics. Robert Hariman is in many ways the foundation for our understanding of political style and serves the purposes of this study well. Hariman has provided the closest analog to this project with his book *Political Style: The Artistry of Power*. In it, Hariman draws four figures, Cicero, Machiavelli, Kapuscinski, and Kafka and their works into a constellation of styles, that we might draw from them in their distilled form to create a more nuanced picture of their functions, limits, and possibilities. Likewise, this study explores for public intellectual style what Hariman did for political style. Each style we will see is not a discrete entity but an interconnected set of orientations and forces that are operant in public intellectual practices to this day.

This study is thus a three piece contribution. First, each style provides an analytic for understanding public intellectual practices and with each we get a certain toolset to draw from in our own practices, be they as academics, engaged citizens, or would-be public intellectuals. Second, each style will be drawn into a constellation of other figures alongside the primary case study, so as to see its application in a variety of contexts. Finally, in order to be properly useful, this study will introduce publics theory and contemporary rhetorical theory into and alongside with contemporaneous theories of the public intellectual in question and my own analysis.

As an analytic, public intellectuals are useful objects of study in their own right. Consider that the current state of the public intellectual, contentious as it is, often mediates public understanding of moral, cultural, and social states. Public intellectuals are expert and laymen, speaker of the people and speaker to the people, a voice of struggle or structure. Each one must navigate the difficulty of those expectations and possibilities. In order to do so, public intellectuals create certain rhetorical interfaces, stylistically produced constructs that shut down, enable, or change the relationship between intellectual production and public discourse. Each rhetorical interface operates through tropes, common places in language around which thinking and action turn, such as faith, economy, democracy, freedom, truth, power, the public and fraud. With each come limits and possibilities not only for analysis but also for application. Rhetorical interfaces and the styles that mediate them draw together sets of practices that can, and have been, taken up in a variety of registers in and beyond the public intellectuals



who best depict or inhabit them. For any intellectual production, academic or otherwise, such a toolset is invaluable for making our labor count.

But of course, tools are of no use without instructions. For each style, we cannot provide a how-to guide without reducing each to a set of tactical niches. And as we will see, public intellectual styles are not contained by the agent of its performance nor are they separate from previous instantiations of those styles. The closest thing we have to instructions is lineage. Each figure will be drawn into a set of relations with similar stylistic deployments because each corresponding rhetorical interface is radically contingent with regards to publics and thus cannot be understood in a vacuum. Each figure selected will then be an exemplar in a long line of engagements with a particular rhetorical interface. Instead of a history of ascent or decline, each constellation of figures suggests a style in constant negotiation with itself and publics.

Publics theory is instrumental in ascertaining the degrees and effects of negotiation within public intellectual engagement because it was not until recently in history that the question of interface between intellectual and public was theorized. Jürgen Habermas ushered in publics theory when he traced the collapse of what he saw as active and passive social groups, namely the ruling class and the public. But over the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century a “public sphere,” annexed the now commonly used term to describe the deliberative public became a place where people, ideally, could deliberate about and critique the shared social reality.<sup>8</sup> The public sphere is not so much a conceptual apparatus, though it is that to a degree, but a literal common place where the public intellectual can operate with and in the public, that is, anyone at any time

wiling to enter the deliberative space. Since Habermas, publics theory has provided a wealth of conceptual metaphors with which to understand how publics form and function, such as public screen, culture, networks, publicity and others.<sup>9</sup>

The public sphere, as a metaphor, holds a certain power beyond the theoretical that should not be underestimated. Boundaries define and confine an understanding and engagement with a public or the public in a way that we can see every day. Take for example the evening news, whose job it is ostensibly to report to the public on matters of public concern. If you happen to catch any of the numerous news outlets you may hear about the ongoing problems with Afghani militants, deadlocks in congress, the new iPhone, a local police chase, or an interview with a reformed gang member who now travels the country warning the youth of his mistakes. Each of these stories, these genres, assumes or even creates a justification for public concern. That is, they expand and limit what constitutes the public's business. Within those stories is usually an address or reference to specific communities, groups, public(s) formed around concepts, race, ethnicity, sex, gender, etc. So, it certainly is not a leap to say that which conceptual apparatus people or persons operate under with regard to the/a public has a direct and potent effect on humanity. The public sphere provides a spatial sense of determinacy.<sup>10</sup>

Publics have limits and boundaries that we can discern or otherwise differentiate between other public spheres. Of course, such differentiation can lead to sometimes unethical consequences, especially from a public intellectual perspective. Daniel Brouwer and Robert Asen specifically critique the public sphere for its tendency to impede a procedural understanding of publics, "Spatial language also may present a

synchronic picture of publicity. [They] have difficulty conveying public engagement as a process that develops over time.”<sup>11</sup> For the public intellectual, spatial metaphors can thus lead not only to an under-theorization of publics but also an inability to actively follow social movements as they cross over discursive formations, as is increasingly the case in the American rhetorical landscape.

Under such a competing cacophony of theoretical metaphors, we cannot hope to run each style through them all. Instead we must first ascertain a picture of the publics as they render and are rendered by the public intellectual via textual engagement. Texts, be they books or vlogs, are the main methods of public interaction for public intellectuals. Each text reaches beyond the public intellectual and enters into public circulation. That in mind, this study will not seek to glorify publics theory, but instead use it after we have a well-developed picture of the operations of the public intellectual style in question and the real and figured publics they address. For example, Alinsky’s publics were both “radicals” in his texts and the very real communities of the Back of the Yards in Chicago. Chomsky, who in many ways is the prime image we have of public intellectualism today (academic, concerned with truth and morality, oriented against the state) responds not only to a classroom or a readership, but also to the culturally emergent demand to respond to a Reagan America. Publics theory will provide a final turning point on which to take an analysis of the styles, interfaces, and publics of our figures towards possibilities and closures. That is, publics theory will best serve the public intellectual when it contributes to continuing and expanding the possibilities of public intellectual style.

To illustrate what publics theory and its relation to public intellectual style means for this inquiry, certain public intellectual practices can be seen as specific engagements with the process of publics. To illustrate in terms of algebra, if X is the public intellectual and Y is the public, then all the signs that designate the relationship (+, -, =, /, ×, ≠, ≤, ≥) will be the theoretical conception of publics that justify that relationship. Michael Warner's book, *Publics and Counterpublics*, outlines the particular components of publics in terms of their formation and continued constitution. For example, Warner says that a public is autotelic by nature. A public exists by virtue of being addressed, and in being addressed comes to designate other parts of itself and other publics.<sup>12</sup> The public intellectual may very well play a generative role in public(s) rather than critique of an already existing structure. Public intellectual styles invite certain kinds of publics to form around or in the rhetorical interface. Alinsky's style constructs a bridge between communities, unifying them into possibly powerful social entities. Chomsky defers public engagement with a monumental attentiveness to truth. Reich and similar contemporary public intellectuals create a circulation of publics through the trope of economy. The generative or degenerative potential of any public intellectual engagement is never fixed or easily predicted. Take for example, Judith Butler's recent attempt to mobilize her intellectual capital towards the Occupy movement. This can be seen via Warner, as an attempt at becoming Butler the public intellectual and becoming a fully constituted public for Occupy. She has all the usual associations and capital associated with public intellectualism (the academy, publication on and of public concern, a performative orientation towards publics) and yet fails to be

anything more than a footnote to the movement. This double unbecoming is not the sole purpose of Butler's address nor can any purpose claim to be the sole motivator. But what I mean to locate with this example is that the double move active in public intellectual interfacing is not as simple as addresser and addressed. The particular relation a public intellectual has to a public is not of physical presence, but one of circulated discourse.

This study will contribute to that circulation by adding style, publics, and possibilities to the public intellectual practices of our time. In that regard, this study is a rhetorical one, intended and implemented for the purposes of timely action. However, this study is also rhetorical in that it has a shared concern with the rhetorician. The rhetorician is in much the same bind as the public intellectual. Rhetoric, if we are not to quibble, is essentially concerned with the power to see the available means of persuasion as laid out by Aristotle. The public intellectual is chiefly a being of persuasion, of moving, and of affecting publics. When I say the rhetorician and the public intellectual are in the same bind, I do not mean merely that they both involve rhetoric. That the public intellectual is mainly a rhetorical style is not a very interesting point. What is of interest is the degree to which public intellectuals engage with publics towards rhetorical possibilities. There is no closure with the rhetorician or with the public intellectual, no discrete object of study, no set disciplinary field. Both however, have a unique relationship with publics in that they can and must speak via the products of intellectual pursuit. The rhetorician shares the public intellectual tension, a mode of life that navigates the oft-times conflicting goals of intellectual pursuit and production

and the active engagement with a diverse public towards influencing or mobilizing the social totality. If we, as rhetoricians, are to speak about speaking then we must also speak to those who speak public and intellectual alike. If we share the burden of the public intellectual, then we should attend to the public intellectual. We may not even be sure where one ends and the other begins.

This study will be divided into three chapters, each of which focuses on a particular figure: Alinsky, Chomsky, and Reich respectively. In a simple sense, these are case studies, but that is as far as the simplicity goes, since each contains a unique style and each was and is responding to a unique public(s). Each chapter thus takes a different methodology of analysis as we need the right lens for the right light. In essence, and at a performative level, this study asks how we can attend to the “how” of the public intellectual.

Chapter 1 begins our investigation with Saul Alinsky, the popular intellectual and community organizer of the 1940s through the 1960s. We begin by analyzing his first real public, the community of the Back of the Yards neighborhood in which he formed his first “People’s Organization.”<sup>13</sup> Once we have a solid grasp of how this community operated and structured itself, we then look closely at Alinsky’s style as portrayed in his deeds and his two main publications on the subject, *Reveille for Radicals* (1946) and *Rules for Radicals* (1971). In turn, we compare Alinsky’s style and method of interfacing with publics with that of Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci. These two figures illustrate the nuances and evolution of what I call the vanguard style of public intellectual, a style mediated and constructed by being called upon by publics. We then take up Hariman’s

work, so that despite the political entrenchedness of public intellectual practice we can distinguish it from acts of politics. The publics theory of publicity gives us the final stakes of the vanguard style and the possibilities it provides for public intellectual practice.

Chapter 2 focuses on Noam Chomsky during his most well-known and prolific period, the 1980s. That being said, Chomsky's publics are not susceptible to the same micro reading of Alinsky's neighborhood action committee, so we must take a look at the broader rhetorical force to which he and everyone at the time had to respond to, Ronald Reagan. I then analyze and dissect Chomsky's style as it interfaces and engages with a public under siege. This style, similar to chapter 1, is then placed in a lineage with the parrhesiastes—the truth-teller—and two other public intellectuals, Immanuel Kant and Albert Camus, who contend with the difficulty of this style. That is, the parrhesiastic style shuts down more possibilities than it opens by calling on publics to take up an impossible relationship with truth that has been a dominant force in figuring public intellectual practice. Public culture and public screen theory work out the particular possibilities of this style in spite of its difficulties so that we might contend with its persuasive force in public intellectual practice.

Chapter 3 brings this study into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with Robert Reich. Reich represents a new form of public intellectual style that is yet to be named, that cannot yet be named as its rhetorical force is still being constructed. Therefore, we cannot analyze publics at the macro level for they too are becoming along with the contemporary public intellectual. In lieu of placing Reich in a lineage, I put his style and the publics it makes possible through a recent rhetorical debate over the purposes and

functions of public intellectuals. We then conclude the chapter with an assessment of rhetorical economies and how this body of theory in conjunction with publics theory writ large can account for the ongoing formulation of Reich's style.

Ultimately, we conclude with a set of possibilities. Each style offers a unique tool-set for public engagement and each must be used. For each style is indicative of a larger rhetorical economy that reflects our multi-modal rhetorical environment. We conclude with a beginning. A new conceptual apparatus and a fresh contribution to an old debate will provide what I hope is a course to set upon: A course filled with styles, publics, and possibilities.



## CHAPTER 2

*Saul Alinsky:*

### *The Vanguard Style and the Generative Rhetorical Interface*

There are two ways most people recall the Back of the Yards (BotY) neighborhood of Chicago's south side. The first is through Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle* in which he revealed to Americans and the world the awful quality of the meat being consumed by the nation. The second is the democratic revolution that took place under the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Committee (BYNC) piloted and produced by Saul Alinsky. Sinclair described maggots and dead rats often being found in food products, and other unidentifiable filth. Workers were in a similar state, as abysmal pay and working conditions did not encourage what we might call today safe-work practices.<sup>14</sup> Sinclair's novel caused a revolution in both attitude and legislation, culminating in the 1906 Meat Inspection Act<sup>15</sup>. Despite this important victory and Sinclair's own efforts in the novel, what was conspicuously left out of the public reaction was an insistence upon improving the lives of the immigrants chained to the industry. Sinclair was once quoted as saying with regard to his book's impact, "I aimed at the public's heart and by accident hit its stomach."<sup>16</sup> Life after *The Jungle* for those in the BotY remained largely unchanged.<sup>17</sup>

As for the People's Organization under Saul Alinsky, the BotY is often remembered as a wellspring of democratic community. The practices and results of the

united Chicago slum resulted in a much larger movement in several major cities including Kansas City and Los Angeles. These movements, collectively called People's Organizations by Alinsky, would in many ways be the lasting legacy for the BotY as the birthplace of modern community-organizing. As Alinsky would have us picture it via his two major publications, *Reveille for Radicals* and *Rules for Radicals* (1943 and 71 respectively), the movement started in the BotY was, "the first real People's Organization... an organization uniting all of the institutions, agencies, power blocs, and interest groups which made up the life of that community."<sup>18</sup> With only a slight push, the BotY moved from a disparate group of ethnicities and old-world tensions into a cohesive front for democratic solutions to communal problems. In Alinsky's own words, "What I wanted to try to do was apply the organizing techniques I'd mastered... to the worst slums and ghettos, so that the most oppressed and exploited elements in the country could take control of their own communities and their own destinies."<sup>19</sup> In essence, the greatest achievement of Alinsky and of the BotY was not that they managed to produce substantive change to their world, but that the strength and source of this change came from the people themselves and not from some outside intellectual meddling.

Sinclair's novelization and Alinsky's social provocation are then the dominating legacies of the people of the BotY. But whether or not life in the BotY was as black and white as its heroes seem to imply (or whether or not these figures were seen as heroes at all) is not so clear. That is, while we might be tempted to launch right into the public intellectual practice of Alinsky that made the BotY into the People's Organization, it

seems that a better image of the lives and orientations of the people themselves is necessary. That is not to say that we should completely discount Alinsky's accounts, but only that in order to understand how he as an intellectual addressing and influencing a public (and thus in the simplest sense, a public intellectual) we must understand as best we can the public in question as well as how that public influenced and interacted with Alinsky's intellectual practice. To that end, we begin by analyzing Alinsky's major public, the BotY community. We then look at Alinsky's life in conjunction with his two major publications *Reveille for Radicals* and *Rules for Radicals*. After constructing a set of stylistic principles from the previous two sections, we draw Alinsky into a lineage alongside Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci. Ultimately that lineage forms the basis what I call the vanguard style of public intellectualism and by placing that style in conversation with public theory, determine the stakes and possibilities of that style.

### *Back of the Yards as Public*

The public of the BotY was not a cut and dry group of impoverished people looking for a way out, though that might be a fair characterization after the events of 1938-1945, the height of the BYNC. James Barrett in his article "Local History and Social History 'Back of the Yards'" speaks best to the competing narrative of just what the publicness of the BotY looked like. Barrett expounds on the different accounts present in two of the more substantive books on the populace, Louise Wade's *Chicago's Pride* and Robert Slayton's *Back of the Yards: the Making of a Local Democracy*. The crucial difference between these two narratives is that Wade expounds on the local pride and

ever-improving conditions of life of the packers in the BotY (an overly optimistic if not outright delusional account) compared to the majority of the populace being employed or otherwise dependent on the meat packing facilities. Conversely, Slayton's account takes a look at the various ethnic groups, and social arenas such as the factory, the church, the social club, the tavern, the family, and the grocery store and how they intermingled and co-created community and eventually a very powerful public, the BYNC. Slayton pulls from anecdotal and archival evidence to build an impressive picture. The public of the BotY was a paradoxical one. On the one hand, because of the various ethnic and other Old-World divides, the neighborhood was, "balkanized into a series of exclusive, self-supporting clusters."<sup>20</sup> Each ethnicity formed its own conclave, not specifically linked to immediate proximity, such as China Town or Hell's Kitchen, but instead tied to ethnicity as a way of securing themselves against the two most threatening forces in the New World: fraud and anonymity.

Fraud was a particularly powerful motivating force for the BotY, as the unfamiliarity with the New World coupled with the ever-shifting flow of employment led to a dire need for honesty and transparency. Over half of the BotY was employed by the meat packing industry and another half of that were not permanent employees, but migrant immigrants or seasonal workers. Often times even the steady employees could expect at least eight weeks of their work year to be spent unemployed.<sup>21</sup> Because of this limited employment, the people of the BotY had to move beyond the familial for protection and into a more socially intertwined community that, according to Slayton as well as Barry Wellman and Barry Leighton (who Slayton draws on moderately),

structures itself on the Village model of community.<sup>22</sup> While this may seem a bit obvious, the larger impact is that the BotY communities were tied together through ethnicity and religion (the two were often conflated via “national” churches e.g. the Irish Church versus the Serbian Church) and often did not hold to nationalism writ large. Instead, the village model established a community around a vetting process with many intricate layers of reputation and affiliation. One member may be enough to get the ear of the local social club or church organization, but it would not be enough to allow entrance into even the most basic formal and informal community groupings. Thus, in a sense, everyone truly knew everybody in the BotY despite the relatively large population (officially upwards of 75,000 in the 1920’s and probably much higher because of mistrust of government officials and language barriers).<sup>23</sup>

The second predominant force behind the formation of the particular public of the BotY was anonymity. Anonymity was similar and in many ways the close companion of fraud. Once the BotY had moved into larger social conglomerates beyond the family, distinct relations emerged as a result of a deeper desire to know one’s neighbor as best as one could. Despite the image given by Alinsky in *Reveille* and *Rules* of an almost inescapably ethnically divided neighborhood as well as some of the earlier reports from fellow sociology students of the period, Slayton tells us a different story. One such example of storekeeper-patron relations illustrates his point:

[Shopkeepers] gave advice and even referred customers to other stores. They supported community enterprises, sometimes those sponsored by different ethnic groups, by buying ads... Some of the owners of larger businesses also watched over local residents... Leo M., co-owner of one of the two major department stores in the area... knew many of his customers by name, and there was usually a bond of mutual trust. People

came, discussed their troubles, and sought advice: 'They felt like they could come in and talk to us.' Even though these men were Jews, priests stopped by to chat, and the owners sent them and the nuns a bottle at Christmas.<sup>24</sup>

Given that fraud was a chief concern for BotY residents, the idea that the grocer and purveyor of the most essential goods (food, clothing, medicine, and housing supplies) would be so trusted is remarkable. True to the old-world style, most every person used the butcher book system so that on payday people would pay what was owed instead of paying for each item as they were purchased.<sup>25</sup>

Slayton, Wellman, Leighton and other sociology students from the University of Chicago, including Clifford Shaw, head of the Area project responsible for Alinsky being sent to the BotY, give us a picture somewhat different from Alinsky's accounts. Alinsky was certainly well known for his grandiose and at times exaggerated stories of his and other's exploits, but his bombast speaks to the unique project of interacting with the public of the BotY. The neighborhood contains a mixture of orientations and social mechanisms. We might be tempted at first to characterize this as a particularly American public, in the image of the grand melting pot. However, the BotY community by the time Alinsky got there was a vast interconnected web of societal, communal, public, and private needs and desires. BotY was not a set of distinct ingredients being stewed into a single taste, but instead was a public created by its conditions to form temporally pliable social bonds. That is, despite the foundation of Old-World ethnic divisions and a general mistrust of outsiders, the nature of their livelihood (the meat packing industry) and the tempest of inequity of their lives caused them to have a unique sense of community that is anything but dogmatic intransigence.

### *Alinsky's Strategy and Style*

Alinsky, for his part, had a unique set of skills, techniques, and tactics that were not wholly created outside of the BotY. If we were to take his writings as gospel, we might be left with the impression that the tactics he used were of his creation *before* he came to the BotY and the people of that small slice of Earth were only the perfect control group to prove his methods. Both *Reveille* and *Rules* give fully laid out systems, *rules*, by which an organizer can create People's Organizations and thus reflect and continue the success of Alinsky in the BotY. Eli Goldblatt in 2005 wrote a distilled version of what he sees as the general adaptable tenants from *Reveille*. Goldblatt's particular focus is on encouraging a model of rhetorical-compositional pedagogy and thus giving educators a new way to think about producing broader movements in their students' thinking. Goldblatt and others like him in many ways give the first sign of Alinsky's practices and engagements as in line with the public intellectual as it is commonly conceived. That his ideas, theories, and public engagements have a wide and accessible range of application, including the Tea Party, indicates the public intellectual tension. By which we might provisionally mean a mode of life that navigates the oft-times conflicting goals of intellectual pursuit and production and the active engagement with a diverse public towards influencing or mobilizing the social totality.

Some of Goldblatt's adaptations must be taken in their proper pedagogical context, but as he is trying to expand the classroom to the surrounding public environment, the maxims retain their applicability. Additionally, Goldblatt places Alinsky

in direct conversation with two other influential PIs, Paulo Freire and John Dewey, creating a clear place for Alinsky in both the public intellectual and specifically framing him within the realm of education. That aside for the moment, the first principle straight from *Rules*, is to “draw on the inevitability of class and group conflict as well as the unpredictability of events for your creativity to invent tactics that fit the moment.” We might call this Alinsky’s most well recognized tactic as well as an indicator of his overall confrontational style. Goldblatt pulls this particular rule from a discussion of those people who, for good or ill, have pushed society towards massive change whilst flying in the face of conventional ideological frameworks of their respective societies including revolutionaries (Fidel Castro, Mahatma Gandhi), conquerors (Napoleon Bonaparte), and biblical figures (Moses, Paul of Tarsus).<sup>26</sup>

In fact, Alinsky begins *Reveille* with a scathing critique of the Left, rendering them as cowardly lions, radicals with no teeth; “Liberals like people with their heads, radicals like people with both their heads and their hearts.”<sup>27</sup> Speaking against the Liberal Left, who would typically be considered his allies, is not only in line with his thinking but in line with its very function. His “moment” as Goldblatt puts it, is one where large chunks of the BotY and similar communities have attempted or were currently attempting to join with labor via the C.I.O. (Congress of Industrial Organizations) and the AFL (American Federation of Labor) and/or various local organizations. However, despite several notable victories (as this was the height of John L. Lewis, president of the United Steel Workers of America and figurehead of the C.I.O.) labor was in a politically tenuous position. To vote right was almost unthinkable, and to



vote left meant a long wait for the right means. Such was the case when despite Lewis's power and considerable influence, his split from Roosevelt in the 1940s led to his fall from power with nothing but a whimper. Alinsky, who would do for community organizing and grass-roots democracy movements what Lewis did for labor, worshipped Lewis. He went so far as to write a book about his life and achievements taking the harsh lesson of Lewis to heart.<sup>28</sup> Without the support of the people in a way that they engage as their own, change cannot occur even with name recognition. The people felt that to follow Lewis would be to leave them with little or no options for the future, prompting a devil-you-know approach.

Alinsky's insistence on that self-belief forms much of his practice and approach, distilled down by Goldblatt into, "Respect people's dignity by creating the conditions for them to be active participants in solving their own problems rather than victims or mere recipients of aid."<sup>29</sup> At first glance, this smacks of the sort of quasi-irenic pedagogical empowerment familiar to many professions. That we would "create the conditions" for them to be active "participants" in their own destiny seems like a sugar coated invisible hand approach. However, Goldblatt's emphasis is again on the pedagogical. Alinsky in *Reveille* and *Rules* was almost dogmatic in his insistence that real change comes from the public themselves via what he called "natural leaders."<sup>30</sup> Despite the reduction of Alinsky's practices to specific tactical implementations in Goldblatt and others such as James Q. Wilson and Donald and Dietrich Reitzes<sup>31</sup>, Alinsky advocated for a much more strategic orientation. We can distinguish between tactics and strategy along the lines of Sun Tzu and Michael de Certeau; tactics are the micro-practices that orient towards

temporally-close goals, while strategy is an overarching set of macro-practices towards a long term goal.<sup>32</sup> In *Reveille* specifically, Alinsky called for a more strategically minded orientation: “The program items are not too significant when one considers the enormous importance of getting people interested and participating in a democratic way. *After all, the real democratic program is a democratically minded people...a people who...above all develop faith in themselves, their fellow men, and the future.*”<sup>33</sup> Faith and the subsequent movement from that faith was central to Alinsky’s style. Alinsky’s writings indicate a precise understanding of his temporally situated public, the majority of which were practicing Catholics in the BotY, and placing belief as the ultimate prerequisite for empowerment and action spoke to his public at a very fundamental level.

Alinsky’s style then focuses on a public’s own value systems at a macro level. He was also keen to insist on utilizing a public’s values and even prejudices towards the larger goal of a People’s Organization. Faith as an article of public action is generic enough to be adapted towards a multiplicity of people, but the particulars of those faith systems were also a great way to create productive conflict. As Alinsky wrote, “you start with the people, their habits, their attitudes, and all those other circumstances that make up their lives.”<sup>34</sup> While we may start there, Alinsky often was known for and bragged about setting up those very attitudes in creative ways for the good of the neighborhood. In this regard, Alinsky’s favored method was the retelling of a story, spinning a yarn in an almost parable like fashion in order to demonstrate exactly what

he meant. That his audience largely relied on stories and parables via their respective religious texts only added to the impact of this method.

One particular example best illustrates Alinsky's style as critically mindful of his audience. Speaking of a People's Organization in an "Eastern Community" (Alinsky almost always used pseudonyms for the various places and peoples of his work. This was not only for the sake of anonymity to still ongoing conflicts, but also to dramatize the retelling e.g. calling an antagonistic law firm "Van Snoot, Van Snoot, Van Snoot, and Snoot."<sup>35</sup>) Alinsky noted two individuals who he called Red Rowe, a self-defined communist and powerful local labor leader, and the Pastor, the most influential religious leader of the community. Without the support of these two leaders the People's Organization could not go forward, as they were imbued with a certain amount of social deferral in the neighborhood; got a problem at work go to Red Rowe, got a problem with God, go to the Pastor. To put it briefly, the organizer in question used Alinsky's recommendations to get the two to the meeting but saw only a temporary participation in sight. So, he appealed to their egos in order to get these two bitter enemies to bury the hatchet. He told each leader that the other "worshipped the ground he walked on" or "he thinks you are the salt of the earth." He did this in the style of an act of confidence, a shameful secret that despite the public displays of hatred towards one another it was only ego that kept them apart. Thus, the organizer appealed to their egos in a double-move—that the other top dog actually worshipped him and that an open opportunity to show magnanimity was to stoop down to the other and allow them their ideas and input. The ploy worked perfectly, "Today this Pastor is one of

the most aggressive, informed, altruistic friends of labor, and Red Rowe's opinion of organized religion has undergone a deep change."<sup>36</sup>

Alinsky's style thus consists of a few central practices: utilize the customs, traditions, and prejudices of a populace in order to facilitate dialogue, use natural leaders in the community to lead the people whilst simultaneously allowing the people to make their own decisions and discoveries (regardless of specific outcome, the point was unity and discussion), facilitate and safeguard the mechanisms by which a public may come to believe in its own power and capacities, and finally *be* a part of that public. The last is perhaps the most particular to his style of public intellectual practice. Horwitt goes into great detail about the lengths Alinsky would go to be accepted as member of a community or public, the most famous of which was Alinsky's affiliation and protection under the friendly wing of the mob.<sup>37</sup> Thus his style was a bold engagement with the public on its own terms. If we were to say which he preferred, the intellectual aspect or the public aspect it would be fair to assume the latter.

### *Alinsky and Marxism*

That being said, his affiliations and style prompted many to label him a communist or Red spy. While this is patently ridiculous, the implication is an interesting comparison that points to something beyond the contemporaneous practice of Red-baiting. Namely, that the closest analogous proposal for a public intellectual practice, a public intellectual style, was in fact laid out by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in *the Communist Manifesto* and to some degree by the Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci. For

Marx, the bourgeois-led capitalist state was a much greater threat to the proletariat than say previous dominant classes such as the aristocracy, feudalism, or organized religion because the bourgeoisie has “left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous ‘cash payment.’”<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Alinsky saw self-interest as the fundamental obstacle for People’s Organizations and thus a more democratic way of life.<sup>39</sup> As I mentioned earlier however, Alinsky’s book was quite keen that a radical must always be willing to use that very self-interest in the service of the greater cause as was the case between Red Rowe and the Pastor. Marx, like Alinsky, saw this as lamentable, but given the particular role for public intellectuals that Marx created, a public intellectual<sup>40</sup> must use and be a part of the situation and immediate material functions of his public.

One of Marx’s most well-known postulates concerning the methods by which the bourgeoisie may be defeated is the inevitability of their demise by their own creations:

The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand, they enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented. *The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.*<sup>41</sup> (My emphasis)

The public intellectual for Marx was thus the ultimate result of the above postulate.

Bourgeois competitive practices lead to its continual appeal to the proletariat for assistance and legitimacy, one of the main manifestations of this is general education and access to the mechanisms and justifications of bourgeois dominance.

Alinsky for his part utilized his formal education for the essential social faction, what he called the “Have-nots.”<sup>42</sup> Alinsky’s breakdown of the Have-nots, Have-somes, and Haves is similar to the Manifesto, not only in its barely triadic class vision (the Have-somes being only a transitional state), but also to the essential mantras expressed by Alinsky right up to his death in 1972, when he expressed as such in a Playboy Magazine article in that same year. That is, Alinsky’s radical must use his intellectual production towards the liberation and continued revolution of those in a constant state of without. Alinsky in both *Reveille* and *Rules* warns of the danger of empowering the Have-nots without accounting for the ruling class’s carrot approach to dealing with upstarts (though to a lesser degree in *Rules* as he shifted towards a more favorable view of the middle-class as a possible beneficial source for democratic revolution). Once the Have-nots get a little bit of money, a little more free time, a little more healthcare, they become not revolutionary but instead the ultimate conservative, “They moved into the nightfall of success, and the dreams of achievement which make men fight were replaced by the restless nightmares of fear: fear of change, fear of losing material possessions.”<sup>43</sup> The problem was not so much rampant selfishness, but that the means of attaining a little bit of the bourgeois pie was done by the top-down charities of hyper-academized reformers.

Revolution is thus for both Alinsky’s radical and Marx’s intelligentsia tied to a necessary relationship between intellectual production *from within his/her own class*. Marx was less explicit about this than he could have been given his own ambivalent position as the intellectual father of a working-class movement. When invited to

become the president of the International Working Men's Association in 1868 he declined saying, "he was a head worker and not a hand worker."<sup>44</sup> Shlomo Avineri, an notable Marxist scholar from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has written extensively on the subject, noting that the cruelest part of Marx's position on public intellectuals was a result not of his ambiguous position, but because of his never having the chance to write it before his death.<sup>45</sup> Antonio Gramsci, renowned Marxist and writer on the role of the intellectual in society, in many ways picked up where Marx left off with regard to the intellectual. That is not to say that he was in any way a mouthpiece for the left out bits of *Das Kapital*, as his theories on materialism and the inevitability of the worker's revolution differ greatly.<sup>46</sup> Gramsci distinguishes between two types of intelligentsia, the traditional type (of which we might say is the idle arm-chair talker) and the "organic" type that comes from within its own class. The organic class was Gramsci's view that intellectuals, as an active participant in the social formation of values and actions, result from the training and elevation of any possible person in a class that wishes to facilitate, articulate, and otherwise speak from and for their representative class.<sup>47</sup>

### *The Vanguard Style*

Drawing Marx, Gramsci, and Alinsky into a lineage of public intellectual style, we do not produce an argument for Alinsky's Marxism. Instead we see a specific style of public intellectual that constitutes itself around a few central axioms: speaking from within a class and public, operating through community values and norms towards a

plurality of community, building community into publicness, an attentiveness to natural leaders and on the ground conflicts, and the production of self-motivation by those publics. Using Marx's manifesto as the genealogical progenitor, we might call this style of public intellectualism the vanguard style. The vanguard style of public intellectualism is a performance of culture that already exists towards one that does not, via community forces and assemblages. It takes its tactics as radically contingent and its strategy as one of continuing the movement of those radically contingent tactics. That is, it is vanguard because it operates at and in front of publics so that their momentum towards more publicness can continue. All names are of course indicative of the difficulty in naming, but vanguard seems suitable for a few reasons. "Vanguardism" as a term has come to represent a certain style of movement leadership by which a party is formed to guide a movement and ensure it does not stray from its path and succumb to corruption. The Vanguard style allows a more temporally nuanced position as well as indicating the more ideologically unconcerned practices of the Alinsky public intellectual, i.e. the way a public calls upon public intellectuals to inhabit the vanguard style.

By conceptualizing Alinsky's actions and ideas as a particular style, we can understand why grass roots movements and other community movements take the form that they do—internally led, insistent raw democratic structures, and turning issues into faith building victories, for example in the Occupy Movement or the Tea Party. The vanguard style is one that must temporally come from the present as a community generated force while at the same time orienting itself towards the



intellectual practices that render communities into future publics. For the vanguard style, the community is the real and thus the present, while publicness is the future or perhaps more accurately the future is the public—the continual emergent union of communities into the extra-communal.

At this point, it might be wise to object or at least slow this train of thought down to consider to what extent the vanguard style is a political style instead of a public intellectual style. If we consider that the figures drawn into constellation alongside Alinsky—Marx and Gramsci—were largely articulating their views with an eye towards social revolutions through a radical change in the social and political formations of shared life, then we may wonder if these people could be properly considered public intellectuals. As I discussed in the introduction to this study, public intellectuals are often made to be distinct from politicians or social reformers, though they sometimes dabble in those arenas. But if the distinction is only a professional one (public intellectuals take their practice into the public without their respective professional platform—educator, novelist, playwright, etc.) then a public intellectual is nothing more than a rhetorical hiccup or wrinkle between the properly political realm and the intellectual activities of his/her profession. However, the distinction is important if we consider that the vanguard style is called forth by the demand of a public for an increased unification of movement—as is the case in the BotY—as opposed to a political style that, like some instrumental interpretations of ancient rhetoric, facilitates the aims and goals of the individual agent towards a specific determinate end. In short, the public

intellectual here is oriented towards futurity via the present while the political style is oriented towards the present via a future justification.

To demonstrate, Robert Hariman in his book *Political Style: The Artistry of Power* begins in many ways with the problem of what style is. Style is essentially an aesthetic practice that performs culture, “Each [style] evokes a culture—a coherent set of symbols giving meaning to the manifest activities of common living.”<sup>48</sup> At first it seems like this content neutral version of style is identical to the one I have been outlining, or rather, that the contentless strategy of Alinsky is not indicative of his particular style but to an overemphasis on style itself. However, style as Hariman conceptualizes it revolves around a political agent as the source of that style. Not that the political agent creates it *ex nihilo*, but rather that he/she chooses to take up a particular style toward a political end. That end is in turn modified by that style but still ornamental in its relation to the ideology or goal if we take Hariman’s initial conception of style to its logical extent. Of the republican style, for which he uses Cicero as the parent model, Hariman says the essential question that leads to the style’s being created and deployed is, “How is Cicero to compose himself in public life?...How is he to comport himself... if he is to become the public figure he wishes to become?”<sup>49</sup> The style is a result of an already established line of becoming. Additionally, the republican style bears some striking resemblances to the vanguard such as a requirement that individuals constituted as citizens should and can successfully strive, “to overcome their private interests through common deliberation, and the ability of the republic through time depends on its ability to cultivate individuals possessing this virtuous character.”<sup>50</sup> This is no doubt due in large

part to the republican style's particular mixture with ideas about human nature and good government.<sup>51</sup> Alinsky too has a large jumble of ideological maxims despite his claim that the radical rests on no truth, be it the oppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie or otherwise. Still, Alinsky's style insists upon a constant rejection of a radical that ends up in dogma no matter how beneficial. Consider how at the height of the BYNC, he left when no doubt he could have milked the newly formed powerbase towards a political end. Instead he left for other cities to offer his services with little or no concern for his political power or maintain a leadership role in the BYNC itself (though as mentioned earlier in this study his ego did get the better of him, it only reminds us that though the man many not live up to the idea, it does not ruin the idea). Politics' chief concern is for power and its deployment towards ends. Public intellectual practice is chiefly concerned only with power in relation to its cutting off generative opportunities. So while political style and public intellectual style are correlates of one another in many ways, they differ in that the public intellectual is ultimately concerned with emergent publics through intellectual involvement towards more creation.

Thus the style becomes not a set of practices taken up by an individual agent but a way of interfacing the demand of the community's becoming public with the public intellectuals particular impetus and energies. What I loosely referred to as "publics theory" (drawn largely from Rosa Eberly, Robert Asen, and Daniel Brouwer) in the introduction serves as a final insight into how public intellectual style *qua* rhetorical interface can contribute to our understanding of the public intellectuals particular role (not to be taken in a deterministic sense) in society. Because publics theory

encompasses several different conceptual metaphors with which to analyze and interact with publics we can have our pick of the theoretical litter for the best one with which to engage with the public in public intellectual.

For this particular public, the BotY and all publics like it in aspiration, model, or reality, we can turn to Asen and Brouwer in their recently published *Public Modalities: Rhetoric, Culture, Media, and the Shape of Public Life* for a conceptual metaphor—publicity. Not to be confused with the accrument of quantifiable visibility, “these publics are not identical to the public sphere—a conceptual social space. They are empirical—things created through action...the mutual implication of theory and practice reminds us that already existing theories of publics can motivate specific practices and that specific practices can generate theories of publics.” Publicity can thus tell us several things about the interfacing between publics and intellectuals with regards to the vanguard style. With regards to the insistence on leaders from within the public, publicity can allow us to conceptualize this insistence as not a misguided humanistic hangover but instead a direct engagement with publics as directed circulations of social kinetic energy. That same social kinetic energy inherent in the form and socio-rhetorical processes of communities is thus continued and channeled into conflict. Here conflict is not antagonism but agonism—the contestation of wills (in this case community willing itself into publicness) towards continued contestation and publicness. We can also apply the same lens to the public intellectual himself, making a public intellectual not always a public intellectual or only when they speak of the public, but a mode of life. As a mode of life, public intellectualism’s impact can be more readily understood as not subject to

a decline or even on the rise because it is constantly in a temporally transient state, that is, always on the move. The public intellectual and thus this particular style, the vanguard, can now be better understood through the degree to which a given intellectual effectively interfaces with a public toward a mutual creation of new rhetorical topoi.

Briefly, topoi are common places of language and in Aristotle specifically linked to argument. They are general conceptual categories that include a large body of symbols or a specific set usually in reference to a discipline or body of knowledge such as ethics or physics. Topoi operate by association, often times arbitrarily. Take for example the medieval common place books, the precursors to modern encyclopedias. Under specific topoi, say community, we get a list of corresponding symbols and concepts that relate to those topoi. However, by placing these pieces into a larger apparatus the way in which they are or were previously related to one another can dramatically change; for example, freedom can change from a prerequisite to democracy to the product of democracy.<sup>52</sup> So what publicity and publics theory writ large can tell us in conjunction with an attention to style as a rhetorical interface is how public intellectual practice creates new topoi. We might say this is no great revelation as language constantly rearranges (do not take this to imply a subjectivity or agency in language although...) current meanings, relationships, and implications in any given interaction with a body of people. However, if the vanguard style is the result of a call to becoming, an invitation to style, then that style does not have to necessarily bring with it the drive to sameness and reduction via the Hegelian problem of the drive to

determine one's world, the drive towards mastery that results in slavery.<sup>53</sup> Style can orient itself not towards sameness but difference. Not difference as a negation, but difference as the public gamble, the gamble to be otherwise. In essence, the topoi of the community—of the BotY and of Alinsky—by interfacing with each other through style produce not the topoi they planned but a new apparatus receptive to the essential gamble of community; to live and risk together as radical agents in a radically constituted world. We have a *reveille* for radicals.

## CHAPTER 3

*Noam Chomsky:*

### *The 1980s Parrhesiastes and Powerless Publics*

To speak of a decade or an epoch is to speak of a people still alive as if they were dead. As if somehow the passing of a single year from 1969 to 1970 or from 1979 to 1980 rendered a tidy end to ten years of human endeavor. Such is the way numerous authors have sought to tackle the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in 10 year monuments. Upon being chiseled down into Halloween costumes, musical genres, and political oeuvres, we often wonder whether or not in trying to get a sense of what it was like to live in a time, to be part of a time, we missed perhaps the messier parts in the name of cleaner eating. The 1980s were no less messy than any decade previous, but the way the American people lived during the 1980s, the way they encountered the problems of their time, was distinct if only for the peculiar veneer of Ronald Reagan. In many ways, Reagan and his administration of “nuclear cowboys” ushered in a new era of public life.<sup>54</sup> Each public had to in some way respond to Reagan and what he stood for. We might tentatively say that not since Kennedy had a nation become so heavily enmeshed in a cult of personality; no matter movement or formation, all had to ask themselves “what’s your take on Reagan?”<sup>55</sup>

Chapter 2 of this study thus, out of necessity, departs from some of the methods of analysis in chapter 1. This study is first and foremost concerned with publics and public intellectuals and the rhetorical interfaces that mediate and alter the relationship between them. That in mind, Noam Chomsky's public(s) at his height were never focused on a discrete community such as Alinsky's, though academia to some degree resembles that stand-in for the larger public. The more diffuse nature of his public prompts us to take a cue from the decade historians and try and get a sense of the rhetorical climate, the persuasively constituted set of large scale constraints and events, that was the 1980s. To begin we construct a picture of the 1980s as a decade of response to Reagan. Counter-movements, neoconservatives, and everyday college students alike oriented themselves to some degree around Reagan's style. Next we take a look at three of Chomsky's works during the 1980s: *Manufacturing Consent*, *Necessary Illusions*, and *Deterring Democracy* and pull a set of stylistic precepts out of the texts. Briefly we then look back toward the Chomsky-Foucault debate in which Chomsky outlines the role public intellectuals have in his vision and how those theories manifest in his works during the 1980s. Publics and style in hand, we determine that the *parrhesiastes*, the truth-teller, best explains Chomsky's non-style and how it interfaces (or doesn't) with publics. To illustrate, we cast Chomsky alongside two other figures, Immanuel Kant and Albert Camus as they represent the poles of *parrhesia* in relation to Chomsky. We end with publics theory and what the parrhesiatic style limits and makes possible for publics.



## *Synopsis of the 1980s*

The 80s might have been just another wrinkle in time if not for the slew of defeats previously endured by the American people. For two decades America had seen its most prominent leaders and figures assassinated or denounced. This of course would have been historically potent on its own but the 1960s and 1970s began on the high of American exceptionalism at its peak. World War II rendered America the glorious victor against all that was evil and in far greater shape than its European counterparts. Symbolically the impact cannot be overstated. The wayward children of the revolution had proven its might and right to be greater than its European roots. America's future looked bright. But after one public icon after another succumbed to violence, the most notable of which would be John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy, and Malcolm X, America's sense of itself was being unraveled. Vietnam divided a nation whilst simultaneously rallying large bodies of people into what is now simply known as the Movement.<sup>56</sup> The 70s proved no better in that regard with Richard Nixon's resignation followed by the third string disappointment of Gerald Ford. Much more happened during the 1980s to shake the sense of America on the rise, at least as a unified sunny conglomerate of moral destiny, all of which is relevant to this study but far beyond it in terms of scope. In short, the United States had perhaps reached its peak, and the public wondered whether it had hit its climax to be followed by a sure and steady decline.

President Carter's final days were perhaps the symbolic tipping point. For over 400 days 52 US citizens had been held captive by Iranian militants after storming the US

embassy in Tehran. To say nothing of the hardships endured by the US citizens home and in Iran, the length of the ordeal and subsequent sense of powerlessness emanating from the White House after two failed rescue attempts took its toll on Carter.<sup>57</sup> On the Eve of Reagan's landslide victory, with Carter only winning a handful of states, President Carter waited expectantly for the hostages return promised to him in the wake of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran.<sup>58</sup> Despite his hopes to close the event that in many ways brought down his presidency, the hostages arrived only moments after Reagan was sworn into office. Reagan's beginning was thus marked for greatness as an end to America in decline. Additionally, the assassination attempt on Reagan just three months into his first term caused his popularity to skyrocket. His never say die attitude and image of American resilience catapulted him into iconic status within the very first year of his presidency. Thus began the Reagan years.

With Reagan came a massive reversal of economic doctrine, a series of obfuscated foreign incursions and policies, and a shift toward a culture of individual achievement as the pinnacle good according to Donna A. Demac author of *Keeping America Uninformed: Government Secrecy in the 1980s*. These are of course, just three ways of grouping a largely complicated network of economic, political, and social forces and certainly do not contain the scope of the period. However, they do represent the forces most dominant in terms of intellectual engagement, particularly that of Chomsky, and the public movements of the time. That is, they provide us with a topographical understanding of the public and intellectual climate of the era.

Reagan's endorsement of supply-side economics known more readily as "Reaganomics," contributed much to the prevailing sentiments of the 80s. Supply-side economics challenged the dominant theory of Keynesian economics by arguing that cutting taxes on the suppliers, the job-creators and producers of goods, would enable economic growth to increase along with entrepreneurship. By deregulating the amount of restrictions on business as well as government spending, the market would see to itself.<sup>59</sup> As an economic practice the effects, values, and drawbacks of this policy are subject to a legion of interpretations and arguments. However, what seems most striking for the purpose of this study is the degree to which Reaganomics bred a particular cultural mindset. By favoring a sense of unregulated business, risk and avarice were rendered rhetorically into American virtues. In the 1987 film *Wall Street*, the antagonist (or protagonist depending on your perspective) Gordon Gekko uttered the famous tagline "Greed... is good." In many ways this was the maxim of the 1980s. Greed, the hungry acquisition of wealth in all its forms, was no longer to be thought of a sign of low moral standing. Ivan Boesky, who Gekko was to some degree based on, announced to cheers on Berkeley campus "Greed is all right... Everybody should be a little bit greedy... You shouldn't feel guilty."<sup>60</sup> Supply side economics through Reagan's image of the all American patriarch, served as the new moral compass for American exceptionalism.

Thus the age of the individual had begun anew this time in the form of survival of the hungriest. No doubt every generation to see its youth from a dusty lens has accused the youth of eschewing the moral traditions proper to them in favor of radical

indulgence. But unlike generations previous, people like Boesky, who would be sentenced to prison for almost 4 years for insider trading, were a dime a dozen and even after the insider trading scandal of 1986 were the norm rather than the exception. Of course not everyone in the 1980s was a thieving millionaire, but the idea that everyone not only could be such a person and that it was good was vastly different from previous generational gaps. To illustrate, the academic environment of the 1980s was one of administrative pessimism; in the wake of Reagan budget cuts and a return to normalcy (Greek life, conservative haircuts, flag-waving instead of flag burning<sup>61</sup>), many in the education sector were managing tight budgets instead of “the time... when they were flush with federal funds and believed in growth as an article of faith.”<sup>62</sup> The time of the yuppie had arrived.

That is not to say that all was well in the kingdom. Despite the slew of historians and journalists ready to paint the 1980s as either a time of American triumph or American evil, some have noted the specific counter-culture movements not reducible to doomsayers or trumpeters. Two such authors, Bradford Martin and Gil Troy, discuss several of the counter-culture movements at the forefront of the 1980s; not only were these well-known at the time, but they represented a distinct move away from the types of activism in the 1960s and 1970s as they responded stylistically to constraints of a Reagan presidency. To name a few: the Nuclear Freeze movement, Central American solidarity, and divestment from South Africa protests on American campuses. These movements best reflect two things for the purpose of this study: 1) that the predominate glam and glitz of the TV golden age concealed, and by concealing actively

indicated a large body of public displeasure and 2) that the styles of public engagement moved beyond the direct-action model of their 1960s and 1970s forbearers into a much more sophisticated and globally conscious style. Bradford Martin in his book *The Other Eighties* explains it best when describing the stylistic differences of these movements,

1980s activists were as likely to try to influence established institutions as to undermine the foundations of their authority. Where the.... Movements of the 1960s took exploratory steps toward connecting with like-minded activists and oppressed people in other corners of the globe, 1980s activists did so with far greater sophistication, pursuing such connections more consistently and actively.<sup>63</sup>

Bradford also describes the response to the secret contra wars in Nicaragua as the “Witness for Peace” movement consisting of large groups of Americans, largely from the religious community, using their non-secret presence as a mode of resistance.<sup>64</sup> If the wars in Nicaragua and elsewhere were being secretly influenced by the United States then it stood to reason that they could not openly present themselves to Americans. So, they literally stood at sites of conflict, acting as a shield so that the US funded contra forces could not attack the villages lest they lose their US backing and international cloud cover. The nuclear freeze movement responded to the country’s newly found consensus over greed by using the same sales tactics to argue for a freeze to nuclear proliferation. In doing so, they were able to gather an incredibly diverse pool of supporters internationally and domestically.<sup>65</sup> The divestment movement took the greed is good logic to its symbolic counterpart, erecting shanty towns on campuses across America demanding the divestment of Academia from the Apartheid government.<sup>66</sup>

Secrecy, occlusion, voodoo-economics and we might say voodoo-publics speak to a time period dealing with style in a very different way than the traditional account of it as ornamental. The time of the nuclear cowboys had serious problems on almost every front and had to contend with them in a previously unaccounted vastness of information and interconnectedness. Publics were attending to the root of social problems, as the 1960s and 1970s had tried to do, but also used the tools and lessons of the Reagan administration. Again, everyone must respond to Reagan. So too did public intellectuals as the 1980s marked the penultimate decade of the expert precisely because an anti-intellectual climate spearheaded by Reagan was now the final split between leaders and advisors, experts and doers as outlined by Mark Jaskela in his work *Intellectual Identity and the Culture Industry*<sup>67</sup> In that regard no one figure best illustrates the cult of the expert at the heart of intellectual engagement with a stylistically savvy public(s) better, than Noam Chomsky. Chomsky continues to be a figure of considerable force in both the public mind and our understanding of the public intellectual as a social category.<sup>68</sup> Thus, an understanding of *how* he responded is necessary.

### *Chomsky as Truth-Teller*

We could devote an entire book (and there have been several) to cataloging every aspect of Chomsky's long career as a public intellectual. So instead of an analysis a mile wide and an inch deep, I have decided to focus on the publications that best represent his climax alongside his greatest demand – the Reagan years. *Manufacturing*

*Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* was Chomsky's most famous work, though it was co-authored with Edward S. Herman. However, to dismiss the book because of co-authorship would be unwise as that effort shaped the methods and styles he would deploy for the remainder of his career. *Manufacturing Consent* established the "propaganda model," a method of analysis based on five "filters" that media outlets put information through in order to determine whether or not to present the information and in what light. These filters are based on structural formations of a propaganda state geared towards consensus, suppression, and illusion. For example, the production of

"flak" or scatter-shot critiques in the media are mutually reinforcing, "In 1982, when the Reagan administration was having trouble containing media reporting of the systematic killing of civilians by the Salvadorian army, Freedom House came through with a denunciation of the 'imbalance' in media reporting from El Salvador."<sup>69</sup>

He would carry this model throughout his treatment of the Reagan administration in his next two publications *Necessary Illusions* and *Deterring Democracy*. What we find is an unadorned (at least in the adjectival sense), loquacious, and meticulously cited narrative via style.

In direct proportion to the high gloss of the Reagan image, Chomsky deploys the common voice, or plain style, in such a way as to indicate full disclosure. That is, while we saw Alinsky and his publics mediating through an understanding of style that was in many ways inextricable with content, Chomsky banks on the rhetorical capital of Reagan's image and turns it toward the world of structural truisms. This allows Chomsky to attend to structure where otherwise he would have been shackled to affect and call to action statements, "we are talking about media structure and performance, not the

effects of the media on the public...the propaganda model describes forces that shape what the media does; it does not imply that any propaganda emanating from the media is always effective.”<sup>70</sup> *Necessary illusions* continues what we might provisionally call de-adornment to emphasize the continual breakdown of his own narrative and framework. That is, while addressing the secrecy and mutually reinforcing structures of media and government he renders the complex network as simple eventualities, “For the homeless in the streets, then, the highest priority must be to ensure that the dwellers in the mansions are reasonably content.”<sup>71</sup> Similar to Michael Foucault’s discussion of torture in *Discipline and Punish* or early ethnographic studies, Chomsky elicits repulsion by his inhabitation of the very system he criticizes, the system *qua* systematicity.

If we were to continue analysis along these lines no doubt we could list countless examples (as his books tend take repetition to its highest levels) and in fact his style invites exactly that level of analysis. Unlike the savoir-faire of contemporaneous forms of public resistance or public intellectual contributions in the form of expert opinion (which he calmly dismisses as one more aspect of the structure immunizing itself against criticism that might label it as despotic<sup>72</sup>) Chomsky has an almost monolithic level of citation trail. Rhetorically this accomplishes two major things: it gives him the ethos of rigorous attention to truth and places him squarely in the academic tradition and the cult of the expert. Consider that Chomsky’s almost ‘can we be surprised’ attitude works in conjunction with a mind boggling amount of investigative work. That any of his conclusions are obvious or the product of a plain to see effort on the part of the powers that be flies directly in the face of the sheer amount of digging that one would have to



go through to uncover what he has. Thus, Chomsky's style both simultaneously invites as at the same time cuts off any invitation to do as he does. Chomsky is the 'every-man' denied.

And that same invitation turned denial, or deferral, frames his conception of the public as it stands and as it could be. Chomsky addresses the public through three different mediums familiar to most understandings of the public intellectual: publications, media, and personal involvement. In terms of publications, throughout most of his works and specifically, *Deterring Democracy* and *Necessary Illusions*, Chomsky makes reference to the public's "wishes" or "will" through polls.<sup>73</sup> Chomsky positions the public as squarely against the evils he sees in the system by citing numerous polls in keeping with his scientific and citational method. The irony of course being that for a man who posits most all institutions as somehow or another enslaved to oligarchic rule, he places a lot of faith in polling institutions. However, it would be unfair to characterize this as up-the-gut hypocrisy as Posner would have us view it. Chomsky is careful not only to cite what, through his criteria, are labeled as reasonably independent, but also careful to use the elevated position of polls in the age of TV consensus against that same elevation. By obeying the format, he betrays it. That double-move indicates how he deploys the concept of the public, but also what his actual public may have been and continue to be.

But of course the above assertion only makes sense if we assume who exactly Chomsky invites to listen to him or become him. That he is both inaccessible and public does not determine who his public is, though it does provide us with some insight.

*Necessary Illusions* was the product of a series of Massey Lectures, the Canadian lecture series that hosts notable figures of the time. These lectures would be broadcast through radio. Now Chomsky, being an actual academic, holding tenure and teaching at MIT for some years in linguistics was more than accustomed to the medium. One of his publics is thus the college student writ large. Within the field of academia and under the ever neutral patronage of the lecture, an intellectual is afforded a particular space with which to both influence a public (the students) and engage the larger public through the prestige of the host institution and the products of those student's endeavors. It should be noted that by this time Chomsky's presence as both an intellectual force and a public figure was already well established. His debates with Michael Foucault in 1971 place him squarely in the public camp of intellectual. So for a man who is a self-proclaimed and longtime anarcho-syndicalist, his methods of public intellectual engagement often fall under the domain of typical media dispersal albeit with a more academic and independent news agency leaning.<sup>74</sup>

In a sense, Chomsky's idea of a public was one that had to be wrested from the constraints of the system by the same methods used to suppress them—information. Specifically, Chomsky orients himself around a trickle-down theory of activism. Information comes from a concentrated singular effort which is then disseminated through various mediums and outlets which in turn raises the caliber of individuality and dissent in the public. Similar sentiments and orientations we see active in many public intellectuals since Chomsky's rise to prominence, such as Edward Said, Norman Finkelstein, and Amy Goodman to name a few. Ronald Barsky in his book *The Chomsky*

*Effect: A Radical Works Beyond the Ivory Tower* describes Chomsky's influence as one that has defined what "public intellectual" means for both Chomsky supporters and opponents even beyond the realm of intellectual debate and into popular culture.<sup>75</sup> Unlike Alinsky's People's Organizations, the Chomsky intellectual has two main tasks which relate not to public *qua* community and a concern with social maieutics but instead to a public faced with Plato's dilemma, that is, once shown the light of truth do you now go back to the comfort of the shadow play or continue towards the painful truth?

In that regard, the Chomsky-Foucault debate best highlights the now privileged purpose of truth-telling at the heart of Chomsky's public intellectual practice. Briefly, Chomsky outlines what he sees as ideal society, one free of institutional domination informed by fundamental human characteristics and rights. Foucault, true to his methods, contests that an ideal reality is all good and well but that the "human nature" on which it is based is grounded in institutional and societal formations and thus it is likely we would only reproduce those very structures in this ideal world. At this point Chomsky turns the argument towards the function of intellectuals in the "intellectual domain."<sup>76</sup> Chomsky marks two key tasks for the intellectual, to boldly envision a just world despite or more accurately in spite of imperfect knowledge, and also to work at a more "philosophical" task of describing the functions of "power, oppression, and terror in our own society."<sup>77</sup> Thus the Chomsky intellectual is one concerned with two types of truth that correspond to the two functions. The first is a concern with the ideal, the future truth, what would be the best and thus what is truly a just world. The second is

concerned with the truth as it exists in the present, the contemporary manifestations that prevent the future truth.

This dual concern with truth has an added element that we have perhaps not emphasized enough at this point, that this intellectual is bound to fly in the face of those very power structures and on occasion incur its wrath. Pantheon publishing company which published several of Chomsky's works including *Manufacturing Consent* was vilified at points for its publication choices (though strangely *Manufacturing Consent* was not present on the list of complaints which we might infer to be the result of its popularity). Chomsky has on numerous occasions received death threats both domestic and foreign and has on occasion utilized police protection.<sup>78</sup> And of course we can easily see how these and other public critiques would raise the validity and influence of his work per the old adage, "if people are trying to kill you, you must be doing something right." His style and his message draw truth in direct opposition to power and in doing so eschews all recourse to conventional modes of inter-system resistance whilst simultaneously deploying them through the media and the newly minted 1980s hyper-hunger for information and sensation. Telling the truth in the face of reprisal is not a new concept nor does it mark him as a derivative of some other form, rather Chomsky inhabits a particular deployment of truth-telling. Particular because it operates and interfaces with the public in such a way as to call to a public and thus demand/invite the same move to be made for those who hear the call. The call to action is a call to truth, the call to truth is a call out to power. We can however despite these singular

differences, place Chomsky in relation to other forms of public intellectualism that orient around truth and power. The most obvious being the *parrhesiastes*.

### *Intellectual Parrhesiastes*

Provisionally, we can simply define the *parrhesiastes* as one who speaks the truth freely. Truth for the *parrhesiastes* is dangerous because it places the burden of truthfulness on the orator. For Michael Foucault who had lectured extensively on the subject, that very risk was at the core of the *parrhesiastes*. In order to speak the truth it requires one willing to listen. The interlocutor then must risk losing face, position, or his notion of truth and likewise the *parrhesiastes* must risk the loss of life and limb at times.<sup>79</sup> Chomsky, in speaking out truth towards those who may very well destroy him, in any sense of the word, inhabits this courage-centric *parrhesia*. However, that is not to say that Chomsky is a *parrhesiastes* rather, that he inhabits a certain style of *parrhesia*, one that draws on a lineage of *parrhesia* as mode of life. We can figure this as a modality of life and a style because unlike Alinsky's radical, or political styles, *parrhesia's* commitment to risk and truth bind it to a totalizing life style. Foucault is again instructive here because he determines, through a large portion of Greek texts and genealogical tracings, that in order to speak the truth frankly, freely, one inevitably must care for the self as the truth becomes embodied in the self.<sup>80</sup> If care of the self is ignored then the truth so embodied in the *parrhesiastes* is corrupted or worse ignored. We can then turn back on the interlocutor that same charge to live *parrhesia*. That is,

because *parrhesia* is a modality of life that works best in the classical sense when it speaks to one with a soul.

At this point one might think that Chomsky certainly has elements of a *parrhesiastes* but does not in any way appeal to a particular individual or power. However, the degree to which he is or is not a *parrhesiastes* is a fruitless question and one that largely misses the point. Chomsky is practicing *parrhesia* specifically because of his commitment to dangerous truth requiring courage and frankness. That he then applies that formula to a public instead of an individual is a product of the parrhesiatic style being adapted to the risks, powers, and publics that have the ability to listen or, in Chomsky's case, more often read. Similar efforts and deployments have been made throughout history but two figures in particular will help illustrate exactly how *parrhesia*, the parrhesiatic style, changes and functions according to power constraints and publics: Immanuel Kant and Albert Camus.

Kant is certainly better known for his metaphysics and impenetrable style than in bringing truth to power. He was at the center of the Enlightenment, championing science and reason as societal virtues. But in establishing the Enlightenment he and others like him sought to define it and in doing so, Kant posited a particular split of truth's function. He attempted to solve the problem of truth being censored before it had the chance to flourish by separating the public and private via the medium that would become Chomsky's greatest ally: the publication.<sup>81</sup> Through the act of publishing one was not beholden to the truths uttered as it was part of the public realm. That is, once published, a text was a sort of free-floating truth unattached to the physical

wellbeing of the author. In essence, what one wrote and what one did were separate. Truth than only exists in relation to power. Truth circulates only by the submission of the author of said truth to obey in their private life. But in doing so, truth becomes freely able to circulate amongst the literate public. The truth is made to submit only as at the same time it betrays the demand to submit. *Parrhesia* is turned on its head for a moment, citing power as its condition of possibility. Christopher McCormick astutely formulates this same subversion of power through its own formations in the name of truth through Kant's letters of obedience to Frederick II. By submitting to censorship and pledging never again to betray his majesty's decrees, he simultaneously – through his separation of spheres – creates a way of speaking truth both to power and to the people. Though his "public" realm was limited to the literate which in many ways renders it more Bourgeois than truly all-inclusive, it marks a decided turn in how *parrhesia* was used with regard to intellectual production and public engagement. *Parrhesia* as a modality of life navigates power through style.

Albert Camus is the other half of the modern parrhesiatic coin. While Kant takes *parrhesia* as a modality of life into a stylistically rendered form of frankness and transgression (what McCormick calls the "rhetoric of obedience"<sup>82</sup>), Camus inhabits *parrhesia* as one who stands alone in service to a humanity that will be. For many, Camus is most well-known for his fiction such as *The Stranger* and his absurdist philosophy (wrongly lumped with existentialism). But, like Chomsky, who functioned as an expert in linguistics whilst publishing largely on matters out of his realm, Camus had an activist life largely separate from his philosophy and fiction.<sup>83</sup> During the French-

Algerian War, he found himself divided as he was of both French and Algerian descent and had family, friends, allies, and close ties with the communities of both nations.<sup>84</sup> That said, his style during the time in his public appearances and in the newspaper *Combat*, for which he was the editor-in-chief of during World War II, differed, in that it positioned truth not so much as requiring courage as the other way around. During this conflict, the French intellectual left had abandoned him, including Sartre who accused of him carrying a “portable pedestal” with which to dispense social justice, and the Algerian independence movement had labeled him a traitor; he used the university in which to speak the truth.<sup>85</sup> In essence, the courageous act of speaking with no allies, especially former allies turned enemies, into a performance of truth. During his speech at the University of Uppsala he figured the courage to create and to speak one’s truth as an essentially mercenary act, “The only really committed is he who, without refusing to take part in the combat, at least refuses to join the regular armies and remains a free-lance...Such freedom presupposes health of body and mind, a style that reflects strength of soul and a patient defiance. Like all freedom, it is a perpetual risk.”<sup>86</sup> The courage to be free, to speak truth freely is a stylistically performed reflection of the true.

As a public intellectual one must navigate between public engagement and intellectual pursuit, but as we see *parrhesia* move from a limited advisor role, in to the public realm through subversion, and finally into courage as an embodied truth, we end up with a lineage or constellation of figures that inform Chomsky’s particular public intellectual style. Chomsky’s style takes up the classic *parrhesia* by utilizing frankness as a vehicle for truth. He turns the constraints and tactics of the power of his time against



them and in doing so freely critiques the existing structure for its perversion of truth, and finally orients himself toward a future public intellectual by daring to act with imperfect knowledge, and thus imperfect truth.

Neat and tidy as this sounds, *parrhesia* may in many ways cause just as many problems as it does solutions. To pick back up the allegory of the Cave, we follow with Emily Dickenson, “The Truth must dazzle gradually, Or everyman be blind.” Additionally, at the level at which Chomsky is encountering the public there seems to be little distinction between a style and a strategy. Whether or not truth is an essentially beneficial affair is another matter entirely and one not unworthy of consideration in this study. First however, it seems necessary to step back from our break-neck pace and see if what we are left with is in fact a style at all.

### *Parrhesia and Publics*

As we saw in the first chapter, style is essentially a content unspecific aesthetic practice that performs culture. With the parrhesiatic style we have a problem then with calling it a style if only because it performs truth not culture. That truth does not, according to Chomsky, draw from the pool of culture and socio-symbolic interactions of public life. Instead truth for Kant, Camus, and Chomsky as it is performed springs forth from the intellectual pursuit alone. That is not to say that there were not differences in opinion as to what truth is as you would find little agreement on that point between Kant and Camus. What connects this lineage finally as a style is that while it performs truth instead of culture it simultaneously invites a public to take up a culture of truth.

*Parrhesia* can operate at the level of the student (correcting the teacher despite repercussions), the friend (saying what you really think of that person he/she likes), the boss (what you really think of their action-item list), and at a slew of other social hierarchies. It operates specifically at borders using truth as a vehicle for transgression. Whether or not the end result is a better society or a friendly debate is not the end of *parrhesia* only the result of singular deployment of it. Each time an agent uses, inhabits *parrhesia* the truth is placed in direct opposition to multitude. We can finally say that truth is a style specifically because it performs culture as the culture to be. Public intellectual *parrhesia* calls upon a public to inhabit a culture of truth.

Chomsky's *parrhesia* is thus perfectly suited to the exigence writ large of the 1980s. The 1980s were marked by publics that had to constantly orient themselves in relationship to Reagan, the stylistic counterpart to Chomsky. And while they would certainly be placed by themselves or cultural historians in direct opposition, from a stylistic vantage point they are very similar. We might say that Chomsky is still subordinate in that sense specifically because he too is responding to Reagan, or rather, what Reagan as a stylistic embodiment of American exceptionalism 'truth' represents. But Reagan and the counter-publics of the 1980s all had to respond to the unsettling possibility that they were still on the path of decline. So whether you end up on the side of screwed from the start or movin' on up, both publics and the public are stuck watching a spectator sport, a border-war for truth. In short because the truth of style, the style of truth, is extrapolated out to the macro-level from the get-go, publics must become passive entities waiting to be addressed into existence.

Here we can look towards publics theory for the ways in which we might flesh out the costs and benefits to the passively rendered publics of *parrhesia*. To be sure, this is a vastly different ending investigation from the vanguard style which we concluded was a co-generative topological interface. What we find instead of a style open to futurity is a style oriented towards the future whilst closing down its very possibility. Michael Warner in *Publics and Counterpublics* tells us that publics in general are created through several curious paradoxes, the most notable of which would be their autotelic nature, “a public is a space of discourse organized by nothing other than discourse itself.”<sup>87</sup> This is especially pertinent if we consider the way in which the modern uptake of *parrhesia*, via Kant, Camus, and Chomsky, utilize both academia and publication to interact with publics. The textual discourse of a speech, book, or lecture mediating *parrhesia* to the public renders people into the public. So if a public is at this time a purely responsive formation, responding to Reagan or Chomsky, than publics increasingly become diffused into *the* public which is largely textual. Certainly Chomsky would not like to see himself as violently coalescing human beings into a passive totality but in isolating himself as the truth-dispenser through *parrhesia*, any public response must by necessity constitute itself only in relation to the discourse which brought it about. In short, Chomsky’s *parrhesia* while bringing the intellectual to the public concurrently severs the interrelationality of life. Truth becomes, in a sense, anti-life.

One could leave *parrhesia* here, but that would ignore the very real efficacy of *parrhesia* in terms of cultural contribution. By that I mean not simply Chomsky as a cultural icon, as that is well documented for good or ill, but rather Chomsky’s *parrhesia*

rolls culture into direct conflict with overt politics. In rendering the public as textual, Chomsky's *parrhesia* also explodes culture to the point of being indistinguishable from publicness and politics. So if that expansion can weaken a/the public by dosing it with Hamlet syndrome (inaction caused by information<sup>88</sup>) it can also break down the very boundaries that previously limited the public as passive toward politics. That is, while Reagan calls upon the public to believe, Chomsky calls upon the public to investigate. Even if such an investigation subsequently cripples a sense of action it can shift the boundaries of publics into counterpublics (such as the aforementioned counter-movements like the Nuclear Freeze) as well as render the enduring legacy of the competing style (Reagan) less effective. Because the truth of *parrhesia* is necessarily related to the individual, the intellectual half of the public intellectual coin, it embodies the combat at the center of any drive for truth. Publics theory can help us then track those battles across culture as Jim McGuigan would have us do via, "the articulation of politics, public and personal, as a contested terrain through affective (aesthetic and emotional) modes of communication."<sup>89</sup> *Parrhesia* embodied in the public intellectual while at surface level defers any kind of rhetorical interface with a public, can upon invitation breakdown previously held sacred barriers.

In many ways reading *parrhesia* through what Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge call "public cultural sphere" in conjunction with McGuigan is a more generous read of Chomsky's *parrhesia*.<sup>90</sup> Public screen theory for instance would allow us to see the interaction with Chomsky and publics as an act of screening. That is, the embodied *parrhesia* of Chomsky through media critique, like a television screen, both

conceals and reveals. To what degree *parrhesia* as a public intellectual style allows or constructs publics with varying levels of autonomy is of concern. But keeping with the metaphor we might also say that the parrhesiatic style may also, at a certain angle and covered in the glare of truth, reflect back on the viewer the structurally determined act of viewing.

## CHAPTER 4

*Robert Reich:*

### *Rhetorical Economies and Contemporary Possibilities*

We have been looking at certain public intellectual styles and the rhetorical interfaces that mediate with publics. We have been trying, through what I consider certain paradigmatic examples, to establish the ways in which previous public intellectual engagement might be useful to the theorization of public intellectuals, publics theory, and the intellectual engagements with publics writ large. To that end, the vanguard and parrhesiatic styles have their influences in today's intellectual atmosphere but to what degree and for what ends can only be determined by offering a contemporary model. Consider for a moment the pervading declinist reading of the current state of public intellectuals. Declinist leanings, like that of Richard Posner, may very well provide us with a method of justification, of selection, by which we can choose an appropriate model. Despite Judge Posner's declinist narrative, his gargantuan list of public intellectuals speaks otherwise. Moreover about a third of his list is alive and active. That in mind, one such intellectual holds large amounts of citation (Posner's measure of success) but also a continued presence in a variety of media outlets as well as personal projects: Robert Reich. I argue that Reich best represents the current public intellectual style as well as best responds to our demand for deployable tactics and meaningful

ways of interfacing with publics. But, unlike the previous chapters, we are living in the era to which Reich is speaking and so to try and breakdown the current public would prove futile at best and violent at worst. Additionally, as we have seen with previous public intellectuals, publics are both called forth by intellectuals as well as call upon them. We shall thus use Reich's texts to determine what kind of publics interface with intellectual practices as well as what stylistic tropes operate within his discourse. We then, in lieu of giving an analysis of publics that are being contemporarily constituted, place Reich in a theoretical conversation about the contemporary functions of public intellectuals. Through that forum, we figure Reich as inhabiting multiple modalities of public intellectual practice. Finally, we turn to rhetorical theory and publics theory to understand how Reich's style points us toward new possibilities for public intellectual practice and public engagement. Ultimately, these possibilities rest on rhetorical economies and Reich's style as a conduit for those circulations.

### *The Reich Style*

Robert Reich has a long and varied career, but one that was in many ways always heading towards a form of public intellectual engagement. While he technically got his start in the Carter administration working as the Director of the Policy Planning Staff at the Federal Trade Commission, he first came to national prominence teaching at Harvard. While there he wrote *The Work of Nations*, a now cornerstone of the political left for its focus on building what he called "human capital" as opposed to feeding the market in order to secure national growth. Bill Clinton, whom Reich met in school or on

a cruise ship depending on his or Clinton's version, hired Reich as Secretary of Labor.<sup>91</sup> It was here that he turned irate at what he would call the "shortcomings" of the Clinton administration whilst still working for it. This even spawned what would be a continuing image of Reich, a fiercely independent intellectual who could both work to get things done (policy) and manage the vastly complicated power networks of public life without getting burned (politics).

From then on, Reich could be heard on National Public Radio frequently waxing about the economics issues of the day as well as larger social issues such as education, morality and civic virtue.<sup>92</sup> He frequently appears on most of the major news networks, and is a frequent blogger and supporter of numerous grass-roots and intellectual movements according to his popular website/vlog Robertreich.org. If this all sounds like the beginning of a stump speech it is precisely because Reich has kept so busy in a variety of media outlets as opposed to other public intellectuals who stick to one predominant medium or exhaust themselves on shores of public opinion. He has also continued to work in an academic setting at the University of California at Berkeley as well as being tapped for President Obama's economic transition advisory board. It was during the past five years that his textual work directed at the public took a decidedly different turn. Two works in particular, *Supercapitalism* in 2007 and *Beyond Outrage* in 2012, stand out as having an acute focus on the public's role in contemporary issues directly through the relationship between the economy and democracy. Additionally these two works allow us to trace a distinctive shift as they both highlight the stakes



during the last two elections, as well as the public demands that Reich responds to in light of what he sees as the public intellectual's output.

*Supercapitalism: The Transformation of Business, Democracy, and Everyday Life* was written at the height of the Presidential election of 2007. His arguments do not constitute a rousing call to the future via the present like Alinsky's *Reveille for Radicals* or a scathing indictment of the present via the future like Chomsky's *Necessary Illusions*. Instead Reich reaches back into what is usually considered an economic golden age of America, the 1940s and 1950s and to some extent the 1960s. Reich calls this era the "Not Quite Golden Age" for two reasons: 1) the civil and ethical problems facing the country preclude him from labeling it a true golden age despite wide spread economic prosperity and 2) he explicitly wishes to not set that era up as a model of return, a nostalgia—inducing bygone era.<sup>93</sup> Essentially Reich creates a narrative of impossible return, not only because temporally speaking it is impossible but also because the structural foundations that made that age possible are no longer conducive with the public goals we have achieved. That would be all good and well, but Reich seems to be well aware of the human proclivity to look for a model of return in dire times. During 2007, the great recession was about to hit the nation hard, but Reich wanted to preempt the natural backlash that happens in such cases. To that end, Reich is keen to place corporations not in the uncomfortable position of straw man, but instead state that "Companies are not citizens. They are bundles of contracts."<sup>94</sup> That is, corporations are the main players in the modern economy but are equally enslaved to consumer/investor demand as any individual precisely because corporations are not

single entities but comprised of individuals with aggregate demand as if they were individuals. Therefore, corporations “now have little choice but to relentlessly pursue profits” leaving CEO’s faced with mounting demand to make profits and rise above competition. Reich posits the citizen at odds with the consumer/investor at the individual level dispersing the current state of affairs equally among social entities, publics included. His style is conciliatory, politic, and above all humble. During his more abrasive insights he tempers them with personal examples in the middle of an economics breakdown. Reich is careful never to say what particular public he affiliates with but he does constantly empathize through anecdotes with a multiplicity of publics, corporations included. Additionally, his numerous public appearances at the time continually show Reich on the plane of level-headedness as well as inhabiting a middle ground between overly technical and overly simple.

Those stylistic considerations are equally invitational as they are strategic. Reich divides people not into groups but into agents split between the citizen half of our motivations and the consumer half.<sup>95</sup> These motivating concerns map over the classic private versus public split. The private side includes all things economic and because of this Reich says, most everything can be removed from the public discussion and the citizen half of our motivations. However, at a stylistic level the division between citizen and consumer is a simple and elegant way to dispense agency to his reader – the change starts with you. Additionally, Reich’s description of the citizen and consumer as two halves of a brain map onto familiar adages and educational tidbits such as left brain and right brain people.<sup>96</sup> In essence, the publics addressed are the publics of the present,

publics complicit in the continuation of social problems. So, it follows that an individual who stylistically favors the citizen half is actively addressing those problems in a very real way. At the same time, if we favor the citizen half we can address those social problems at their site of invention—economic opportunity. Reich is keen to note that the constant preference for the consumer is not necessarily from greed, but rather from the plethora of opportunity consumers have to be consumers; “To confuse greed with opportunity is to confound desire with availability. The libidos of college students are not higher than they were forty years ago; the ease with which they can exercise them, however, is arguably more bounteous.”<sup>97</sup> He is also quick to skip from the individual to the public or publics. He addresses the public and publics separately: one being the social totality that approves or disapproves of given scenarios, (“do we approve of what has occurred?”<sup>98</sup>) and publics as divisive elements within that totality spur movement or otherwise set the ground work for change. For example textual contributions like Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* or social movements are meaningful efforts that are, “not substitutes for political action but preconditions for it.”<sup>99</sup> Ultimately, for Reich at this point, the contribution publics make is at the level of the individual contributing to a social system of movement and multi-modality. That is, publics operate at a variety of levels because individuals operate at a variety of levels. And for each consumer that chooses to be a citizen, political action and social change are made possible: “The first step, which is often the hardest, is to get our thinking straight.”<sup>100</sup>

What we see in *Supercapitalism* is a judicious public intellectual style carefully attending to the multi-modal publics of the age as well as prepping for what he saw as a

structural set-up for catastrophe. To his credit, and unlike classic public intellectual predictions, Reich was right and only a year later the economy would go bust. However, over the next few years the publics Reich was speaking to and supposedly were in play would change dramatically. In light of the economic bust and an increasingly polarized body politic, Reich would come to engage with publics more radically than the policy-oriented, right-thinking, citizen amalgam. Case in point, *Beyond Outrage: What Has Gone Wrong with Our Economy and Our Democracy and How to Fix It* is dedicated to the Occupy movement and “all others committed to taking back our economy and our democracy.”<sup>101</sup> While *Supercapitalism* was dedicated to a family member in classic style and additionally had a much less aggressive title, *Beyond Outrage* opens with higher stakes and a less politic style. Reich also participated in the Occupy movement and brought his full political and social capital to bear on it as well as other demonstrations as reported by UC Berkeley News Center Website.

Beyond his public engagements, *Beyond Outrage* talks to specific disparate publics in almost rhythmic regularity. For example he often mentions “homeowners”, “taxpayers”, and “consumers” three times as much as he does generic or less specific terms such as the public or people of *Supercapitalism*.<sup>102</sup> These specific monikers take cues from political pundits, playing up every day neutral associations into a scatter-shot appeal system. As any political analyst or advertisement executive will tell you, this is the base line strategy for structuring a public into a set of malleable respondents. Such a technique ostensibly goes against the plain disclosure and humility of *Supercapitalism* while simultaneously playing up the passive naïve public for which Chomsky and the

negative stereotype of public intellectuals are usually known for. In three major sections, we have the “regressive right” “distracting” and “dividing” the public through a shift in conversation to what he calls “private morality.”<sup>103</sup> In fact, his otherwise all-inclusive style is turned on its head, skewering left and right alike along with the public, “Not even Democrats any longer use the phrase ‘the public good.’ Public goods are now, at best ‘public investments.’”<sup>104</sup> The final breaking point for any hope of modern, active, and intelligent publics almost seems to be dumped into the Not Quite Golden Age (now rendered simply The Great Prosperity along with the Great Regression of the 1980s for imagistic symmetry<sup>105</sup>) and figured currently as not even worthy of words as the book is littered with child-like drawings depicting citizens in “issue cocoons.”<sup>106</sup>

In terms of a declinist reading of public intellectuals the above shifts might be considered the final straw. Yes, he on occasion criticizes the left, but for the most part the right is Reich’s punching bag, placing him in the category of one more public intellectual now condemned to rabid shouting. As CEOs are now the capital Evil of the modern world, he asks us to “connect the dots” (again a child’s educational metaphor), while simultaneously bombarding the reader with name drops of powers-that-be: Wal-Mart (which in *Supercapitalism* was the model of the system producing companies like it as a necessity), Bain Capital, and the Koch brothers. Despite that, Reich ends not with a final condemnation and an exit stage-left, but a handbook of sorts for doing something about the corporate injustice and thus sets himself apart from Chomsky’s legacy of critique without prescription. The final chapter, “Beyond Outrage: What You Need to Do,” is not a critique but a step-by-step guide for not only articulating his positions and

policies, but also what particular styles and tactics can be used to achieve them. Far from Posner's public intellectual offering only critique or a rambling radical call to action, Reich provides the pill for the poison he describes, "Yet the only antidote for big lies is big truth—told relentlessly and powerfully. You must be armed with it."<sup>107</sup> He calls for "leaders" to spur movements. These leaders are not tasked with rising to power but combatting "work avoidance mechanisms" such as denial and escapism that any academic trying to invigorate a classroom has encountered.<sup>108</sup> Reich is specific in his call for leaders without a hierarchy or titles, but rather leaders as a general category of citizen because "leadership doesn't necessitate formal authority. You don't need a fancy title in order to be a leader."<sup>109</sup> Examples he uses are some of the big classics of non-violent resistance: Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Dolores Huerta.<sup>110</sup> Obviously drawing a parallel between possible on-the-ground citizenship and some of the biggest names in non-violent resistance creates a certain legacy by association meant to facilitate the four avoidance mechanisms present in potential leaders.

### *Reich as Public Rhetor*

Reich also quite explicitly calls for stylistic, classically rhetorical considerations in his leaders. We need not look far to find Aristotle's classic conception of ethos when Reich says, "You'll be most convincing when you combine moral clarity with undeniable facts and common sense."<sup>111</sup> Moral clarity could correspond to *arête*, the ancient Greek concept of containing virtue, undeniable facts to *phronesis*, practical wisdom, and common sense could be read as goodwill, *eunoia*.<sup>112</sup> However, the cultural contexts, the

given situations in which to see the possible means of persuasion, are different for Reich than the orators that Aristotle observed. Specifically, “common sense” as it is used here is a troublesome reduction of the more complex notion of common place. Saying they correspond does not make Reich Aristotelian, but that each of the qualities of his leaders are charged to act in such a fashion, to act in a certain way according to three precepts and towards a persuasive end is particularly classic. Reich’s conception of leader is thus first an ethos-driven one, but then classically supported by pathos and logos appeals via his guidebook chapter, culminating in what could have easily been a classical rhetorical handbook with the addition of content. Furthermore, Reich continues the chapter with sound bites of pre-prepared sloganistic versions of his major arguments and policies, covering invention whilst simultaneously attending to the other four canons of rhetoric: organization (they are short and concise), style (full of verve and tenacity while downplaying aggressive language), memory (their brevity and thematic unity allows for easy memorization), and delivery is handled alongside the description of leader behavior and interaction. What is unique about Reich however is not that he borrows so directly from classical rhetoric, but that he does so in the true spirit of Aristotle and Cicero by attending to the five canons simultaneously without hierarchizing them. Additionally, Reich attends to kairos, the subjective notion of time which was of prime importance for both Aristotle and Isocrates, through clever examples such as holding tax inequality demonstrations on and around tax collection days.<sup>113</sup>

In sum, saying Reich's style is rhetorical amounts to little more than opening one's ears, but that one of the most prominent and continually influential public intellectuals deploys rhetoric in such a classical fashion for the sake of potential publics is something that should be further theorized. He attends to the five canons as something deployable and producible for public(s) use whilst simultaneously inhabiting a middle space of instigator and critic. He calls for deep structural-cultural critique and subsequent contribution to societal thought in *Supercapitalism* while playing the role of rabble-trainer and self-effacing meta-critic as he comments on his own inefficacies and shortcomings. Yet he never stays too long in the academic dugout, changing his style in *Beyond Outrage* as he moves with the public's movements, that is, the movement of publics. Reich's style contains elements of the vanguard and the parrhesiastes, though he doesn't inhabit a style of centrism. Instead his style draws from these two contextually. In essence, the modern public intellectual is starting to look more like the omni-intellectual; taking cues from most of the major competing theories of not only public practice but also competing theories of publics formation and competencies. To that end, several investigations of the rhetorical renderings of the public intellectual are still ongoing. In 2006 a forum was opened in *Philosophy & Rhetoric* in which a number of rhetoric, philosophy, culture and publics theorists were invited to answer the pressing question of what public intellectuals should be doing and what relationship they have to rhetoric. In many ways, the three major positions that the respondents lay out correspond to the previous two styles discussed in chapters 1 and 2.



Steve Fuller conceptualizes the public intellectual as essentially a “crisis-monger” whose sole purpose corresponds directly to the equity of publics along with their ideas. As dominant ideologies correspond with dominant publics, they naturally shut out other publics and corresponding ideologies and vice versa. Fuller posits that this proclivity of publics to form a dominant central public, thereby shutting down others, is the core measurement and motivator of intellectual production via “negative responsibility... whereby one always judges the moral worth of an action in relation to the available alternatives not taken by the agent.”<sup>114</sup> Any intellectual is public to the degree he/she attends to negative responsibility, specifically academics because their intellectual bubble of production and research allows them a wider scope of all ideas and actions, and the publics that use those ideas and actions. Negative responsibility also corresponds to the avenues or mediums of intellectual production. So, the more scope or sense of available alternatives an intellectual has, the more the classroom or the publication becomes not enough or a direct betrayal of the demand/burden placed upon said intellectual. Public intellectuals are intellectuals who attend to justice.<sup>115</sup> By this definition or mode of public intellectual, Reich fits the mold well as he attends to publics through a variety of mediums and has increasingly expanded his stylistic rendered activities as his career has progressed. Fuller’s public intellectual is constantly in motion propelled by the increasing injustice placed upon him by his own activity. This also fits with the increasing number of different publics Reich’s addresses in *Beyond Outrage*, as well as his constant and ever increasing presence on the blogs, his new open forum reddit.com account, and his frequent, now almost habitual, contributions to

National Public Radio. Consider also that the Occupy movement was feverishly endorsed by Reich as a beginning, a first step, and thus stylistically interfaces with publics via the trope of social progression.

In response to Fuller, Nathan Crick asserts that we must escape the binary logic of the Gramscian intellectual mentioned in chapter 1 and the Ivory tower intellectual now commonly associated with Noam Chomsky. This is a very common theoretical maneuver among modern communications scholars, that is, reject the premise and therefore escape the binary. Fuller's account of the public intellectual for all its grandiose talk of justice and silenced publics recommits intellectuals to an intellectually bankrupt version of publics; one that Crick says originates with the Enlightenment and finds its truest expression, mythologically speaking, in the Dreyfus affair which Fuller heroicizes. In order to escape the binary and passive publics, Crick places the public intellectual in the public sphere as "no more or less significant than the average citizen."<sup>116</sup> The citizen and the public intellectual are both parts of a process public, a public constantly engaged in practical judgment. Thus, both constitute themselves through habits and behavior that allow the continuation of community and publics. Consider how Reich includes himself into his narratives with anecdotes and self-referential aphorisms. The effect is to situate himself as a part of the public which he addresses. To that end, any intellectual would be a public one. They only differ in that they seek to create "enduring works of influence" upon those very habits and behaviors through a trickle-down medium. Public intellectuals through their own personal intellectual pursuit create works that are then more easily received by those speaking in

a similar medium such as academics, teachers, journalists, politicians, etc. that is, people in the business of culture.

Strangely enough, with Reich we find that Crick's theory applies just as easily as Fuller's. Crick says that because of the focus on intellectual production, public intellectuals respond to a "philosophical situation," (in contrast with the renowned "rhetorical situation" put forth by Lloyd Bitzer in 1968) in which public intellectuals, "respond to their philosophical situation by producing a work that conceptualizes and provides direction for solving longstanding and pervasive problems and are then successful in helping change the habits and practices of a public."<sup>117</sup> Reich's deep structural critique influences publics through the uptake of both the ideas present (theory) and the persuasive methods by which they are made manifest (practice) thus altering the habits of publics through a variety of mediums. For every politician that uses his maxims, every "leader" that deploys his tactics, and every citation Posner tabulates by Crick's standard Reich is not only a public intellectual but a successful one worth emulating.

By contrast, Steven Mailloux in the same forum makes a decisive split. The title of public intellectual and the subsequent application of analysis for public intellectuals shall be, "reserved for those thinkers who directly engage with and are engaged by nonacademic publics."<sup>118</sup> Mutual engagement, as simple as it sounds, does not fit with the classic division Crick cites but it does have a long rhetorical history. In chapter 1 we saw how Saul Alinsky engaged publics through the rhetoric of futurity and risk which in turn spurs on the topological invention of his public intellectual style. Similarly, in

chapter 2 we understood Noam Chomsky's style to engage the public from the tower, but also through investigative occlusion he engages with publics at the level of truth in contest. From that same mutually engaged mentality, we can see that Reich fits the bill in all his held positions (teacher, politician, manager, administrator) and his stylistic shifts in response to contemporary public demands (impending elections, squelched ideologies, decreased citizen participation). Mailloux responds to Fuller by saying that the demand placed upon public intellectuals as agents of justice cannot reasonably be applied when considering the rhetorical capacities of academics. By Crick's logic the public intellectual and the citizen inhabit the same domain but contribute in different but equal ways. However, Mailloux extends this by noting quite rightly that, "many scholars have neither the sociopolitical desire nor the rhetorical skills needed to work as public intellectuals."<sup>119</sup> Mailloux then calls for Fuller's demand to be applied to disciplines and "interdisciplines," instead of individual members.<sup>120</sup> Again we find no contestation from Reich's works or his style. His policies and stylistic models work equally well at the disciplinary (or organization if one wished to expand it beyond the academy) as they do at the individual by turning the "corporations are people" narrative on its head as we saw in *Beyond Outrage*.

In each case, we see Reich fit the rhetorical bill for a multiplicity of public intellectual modalities. We can see how because of his style and both the textual and real publics he addresses (and is addressed by) all of the public intellectual models laid out by the interdisciplinary panel. We could end here and simply call for new theories not so full of holes. However, that would assume that the intent of these theories was

to build an all-inclusive theory of the public intellectual. The forum and to a degree this study have a different purview, namely, to render the public intellectual as rhetorically situated by the publics they engage with. That is not to say that this study or the forum just discussed is unique in that regard. Similar forums have been done as recently as the S-USIH in 2011 as well as others since 2001.<sup>121</sup> But reading Reich in and through the previous theorists does lead us to conclude that perhaps any public intellectual shortcoming is not necessarily the result of rhetorical carelessness. Rather, public intellectuals of the current generation struggle more acutely with the essential paradox operant in public intellectual practice, namely, the tension between intellectual rigor and public utility. Scott Welsh can take us a step further if, as he says, we understand the tension and split in the modern public intellectual as two-fold: “between scholarly reflection and political agency but also by an antagonism between the production of expert knowledge and a democratic faith in the judgment of the people.”<sup>122</sup> If we are to take these two poles and place Alinsky and Chomsky within, we would find an obvious polar preference: Alinsky with his democratic faith and political agency, and Chomsky working from scholarly reflection and expert knowledge. That being said, Reich seems to be not only struggling with the variety of stylistic considerations between Fuller, Crick, and Mailloux, but also with a particular tension between Welsh’s poles. Of course, as we saw in the previous chapters both Alinsky and Chomsky were not so simple, but they clearly leaned one way or the other when it came to the structurally antagonistic formation of the public intellectual. Reich on the other hands seems to operate not in the middle so much but as a constantly contested entity.

Reich produces public intellectual works through publication, public appearance, past and current employment, and regular address through the media. His style is one being pulled apart by its own content – discussing tax loopholes through personal anecdotes, complex economic systems through quips and drawings, instantiating himself as a constant commentator while saying the same thing, and wringing his hands in the street while keeping them pressed to the classroom lectern. Reich’s public intellectual style is in contestation with itself and through that contestation attends to both a multiplicity of publics and a multiplicity of mediums. Welsh, and by parallel Fuller, says that the antagonism at the core of rhetoricians, who now share the problems of the public intellectual, stems from a much more viciously present disjunct between reality and our symbol-use as it corresponds to ideality. As Welsh explains, similar to Friedrich Nietzsche’s concept of lies in an extra-moral sense and Slavoj Žižek’s work on fantasy, any attempt to interact with reality at the level of language ultimately fails to contain reality because symbol use is by default reductive.<sup>123</sup> That very failure of the public intellectual and rhetorician to “come to terms with the impossibility of closure”<sup>124</sup> magnifies the antagonism at work in the public intellectual as a subject. That being said, Reich in attending to the three figurations of Fuller, Crick, and Mailloux inhabits that tension. So where Welsh sees an antagonism needing to be resolved, Reich through his inhabitation of competing public intellectual styles does not merely “come to terms” with that antagonism but turns it into a form of agonism. Each component of his style pulls against another. For example, his split-brain citizen in *Supercapitalism* is pulled apart and back together again via the two extremes of the despotic CEO and the

leaders of *Beyond Outrage*. Constantly in contestation, Reich shows us how to make style and by including himself in the narrative at a variety of levels, makes available his style. Reich turns style via his leader-led publics into a rhetorical smithy for producing more of the same, that is, more circulated style. Each performance of American culture undergoes shifts as it circulates in the rhetorical atmosphere such as the Not-Quite Golden Age being swept through style into the the Great Prosperity. Each circulation of style is ultimately geared toward consumption and continued circulation for the, “production of inventional resources suitable for appropriation by citizens aiming to affect political outcomes.”<sup>125</sup> Reich makes available his style itself.

Of course, we might be moving a bit fast and beyond both Welsh and Reich. Welsh envisions inventional resources as something produced from a meta-rhetorical standpoint similar to Mailloux’s metacritics by investigating, “the rhetorical antidote to every alleged rhetorical cure.”<sup>126</sup> Likewise, Reich places a premium on investigation and critical attentiveness in both his own investigations (he commonly uses phrases like “don’t take my word for it,” “I’m not the only one,” “get your own facts”) and his method, with one exception. *Beyond Outrage*, unlike his previous works including *Supercapitalism*, has no bibliography. No endnotes or citation trail is to be found save for brief in text citations used more for dramatic effect than scholarly rigor. Even still, Reich’s style interfaces with the public in much the same way the great American orator Ralph Waldo Emerson did, by using himself as the proof of a style’s effectiveness (I am great therefore greatness is possible) and by describing the mechanisms by which said proof is obtained as a way to render himself into a deployable socio-political force (you

can be great by doing x and in doing so become me).<sup>127</sup> If we substitute the word greatness for fixing our democracy then you have essentially the same rhetorical interface by which a style engages publics. Reich inhabits the public intellectual tension writ large and in doing so does not enlarge his theories to the point of inapplicability, nor shackle him to the public contestation of the day, but can instead, as the late public intellectual Edward Said said, “stress the absence of any master plan or blueprint or grand theory for what intellectuals can do... So in effect this enables intellectual performances on many fronts, in many places, many styles, that keep in play both the sense of opposition and the sense of engaged participation.”<sup>128</sup>

### *Reich’s Publics*

To what extent publics have to inhabit that same tension is perhaps the looming question of modern public intellectual practice, including Reich’s, because by coming to terms with antagonism even in the sticky realm of policy, Reich cannot fully account for what counts as public. Alinsky’s publics were inextricably bound up with community. Chomsky’s public was organized by a universal demand, to respond to Reagan. Reich’s leaders seem to be up against a plethora of forces the majority of which are not even aligned by one great power in particular, be it government, corporate, moral, or ideological. Even though the deep structural reading bears resemblance to Chomsky and similar parrhesiatic styles, Reich removes in *Supercapitalism* the moral judgment of those structures. Corporate CEOs are just as much the victim of an interconnected shortsighted set of policies as the consumers and politicians—all are equally culpable.



Likewise, the various publics both explicit and implicit in Reich's works are all mutually constructive forces, each with its own set of fluctuating powers and political, intellectual, social, and economic agendas. So, it seems that publics constituted as such are no longer able to so easily be sorted into even remotely neat categories. For the contemporary public intellectual, publics might no longer be the target of style or theory but rather the purpose of style and theory. That is, every intellectual stylistically creates publics that by necessity must include the public intellectual.

Ulrich Oslender in 2007 comes to a similar conclusion when seeking to expound on the modern intellectual's lack of preoccupation with associating themselves too clearly within the modern hierarchy, "[public intellectuals] do not stand out as symbolic figureheads for social movements but as collective intellectuals seeking common ground and cause with resisting others in a nonhierarchical manner."<sup>129</sup> The "collective individual" (which he pulls from Bourdieu which in turn is the companion term to the local intellectual<sup>130</sup>) is a "series of critical networks" with two functions: "firstly, a negative (i.e. defensive) one, critiquing and working towards the diffusion of tools to defend against dominant power discourse; and secondly, a positive (i.e. constructive) one that contributes to a collectively perceived political re-invention and political and economic alternatives." The collective intellectual, bodies of intellectuals and their texts circulating as a public, through their defensive function, codetermine alongside other publics what is the dominant power discourse at the time. So, while there was equilibrium of culpability at the time of *Supercapitalism*, per the defensive function of Reich as a local intellectual whose style is polyvalent and multi-modal, Reich shifts the

diffusion of his style towards power, the wealthiest 1%. Reich then figures new political and economic alternatives via the constructive function not by offering himself as the intellectual/leader of these concepts but as one more disseminator within an economic system of style – an economic rhetorical interface.

Essentially, by talking about the economy Reich ends up talking through the economy as a means of performing all of the possible public intellectual modes while simultaneously allowing the easy circulation of theory and style among a multiplicity of publics. Reich often refers to consumers, homeowners, and citizens in the same page and in doing so attends to the now ubiquitous nature of economic ideology/logics/style. As we said earlier, Reich's style inhabits the tension of the public intellectual and in doing so contributes to a collective intellectual. By creating a discourse that circulates via economic logic and theory and also including himself in that circulation, Reich's style breaks down the public intellectual tension. Economics is a sort of macro-topoi for Reich as it allows him to talk, condemn, and advise each and all. Simultaneously, the particulars of any given economic exchange, be it of physical or social capital, cannot be made completely realistic. Economics function at the level of the symbolic and thus produces or, more accurately, reproduces the same anxiety of the public intellectual. Yet, because economic topoi, even at the level of the slogan or redacted policy, operate on the psycho-symbolic logic of circulation, it must keep going and go to where it (re)produces the most. For example, "Whenever privilege and power conspire to pull us backward, we eventually rally and move forward. Sometimes it takes an economic shock...This is how progressive change occurs. This is how it has always occurred"<sup>131</sup>

Risk, movement, and public engagement are the natural functions of economic logic, thus, if the economy is sacred then so too is circulation and change.

So, while “collective intellectuals” eventually create actual institutions or networks, in doing so they shackle rhetorical capital to institutional capital. Reich on the other hand for all his “eggs in many baskets” disperses his style through the trope of economy to the point where he no longer needs to be shackled to his own citation. One might object that the “shackles” are necessary evaluative processes akin to knowing the reputation of a manufacturer or oversight in a factory. Credence goods are goods that must be evaluated based on the input, the source of their production, because in the case of public intellectuals we cannot ascertain the value of intellectual production completely by its outputs or functions. Given that his recent work including *Beyond Outrage* has almost no citation, we could judge this as a particularly suspect credence good. That is, a good in any given economy of which it is difficult to judge the quality. Posner, much to his credit, cites the inspection and valuation of intellectual credence goods to public intellectuals.<sup>132</sup> However, what we are seeing with Reich is not merely an intellectual function toward specific intellectual goods, but instead an intellectual function as a good itself within rhetorical economies of trope inside publics. In doing so, the contemporary public intellectual breaks down, through the rhetoric of economy and the economics of rhetoric, publics at the same time as it reproduces publicness through constant reengagement.

Ronald Greene figures this possibility as something that allows an affirmative way out of the tension indicative of both rhetoric and the public intellectual: “rhetorical

agency can be remodeled as communicative labor, a form of life-affirming constitutive power that embodies creativity and cooperation.”<sup>133</sup> Capitalism for both rhetoric, Reich, and the public intellectual is not going away and so by dealing with neoliberalism on its own terms, Reich’s style performs immaterial labor that cannot be eaten up by the “command logics of bio-political capitalism.”<sup>134</sup> And so finally without delving into speculation we can see that the economy buys Reich the ability to interface with “transsituational”<sup>135</sup> rhetorical situations as the contemporary neoliberal multi-modal reality demands. By reframing the rhetorical agency of public intellectuals as one operating in an economy, and by using the trope of economy to establish publics (of which the public intellectual is now necessarily a part), “rhetorical agency, in all its communicative dimensions, is at once an instrument, object, and medium for harnessing social cooperation and coordination as the life-affirming value of communicative labor.”<sup>136</sup>

But all is not well in the kingdom, for as Fuller and in a way the vanguard style actively warn, transcending the difficulties of interfacing with publics through the trope of economy comes with the baggage of the economy, namely, the economic rationality of the average. Catherine Chaput puts the problem best when discussing the logics of economics when applied to human behavior: “neoliberalism, ensuring that everything functions through its prized logic of economic competition...Such a schema no longer enforces appropriate subjectivities but regulates the point at which individual actions impinge on the statistically favored rates of population success.”<sup>137</sup> Essentially, by using economics and its associated rhetorics of circulation, consumption, production, and by

temporal fiat neoliberalism, Reich may put at risk the very publics he seeks to move (circulate), dispersing the risk that is usually embodied in the public intellectual amongst the public. Equal culpability in both realist and rhetorical terms tends towards the establishment of the economic law of averages as a norm. That we are all part of the problem only waters down agency if it robs counterpublics specifically of their historically predominant motivating energy, injustice.

That essential quality of counterpublics, as oriented against dominant publics or ideologies, is not so much a factual quality of publics but rather the major rhetorical analogue by which publics come to affect the larger social totality. As we know from Marx, circulation is the means by which surplus is created and this surplus is what produces the possibility of profit.<sup>138</sup> Chaput along with Greene will take this to mean that material value and rhetorical value operate alongside one another in the human economy. The difference and the relevance for the purposes of this study is that Chaput and others such as Teresa Brennan want to say that affect is the means by which rhetorical value is carried.<sup>139</sup> The payoff, to put it plainly, is that the public intellectual becomes not a discursive role or even a stylistic mode but a conduit for an already on-going process, “we do not have to shape our discourse through someone else’s imaginary, nor do we have to change that imaginary. The new goal is simply to increase communicative exchanges that circulate positive affects to deliberate in such a way that we all become more open to the world’s creative potential.”<sup>140</sup> Affect, like publics, has both a long and a short history of theorization and is thus difficult to use without reducing it to mere emotion. We need only consider Spinoza’s *affectus*, the capacity to

affect and be affected, as broad as this concept covers, to see the problem—the muddiness of affect. For us here, let affect be defined as the cultural intensity driving and coloring action as it is transmitted in and through public(’s) participants.

Reich as public intellectual cannot hope to contain, or by rhetorical monopolization hope to account for the surplus of affect going on in any given situation. But, if we take affect to be the carrier of his tropology, then Reich’s style circumnavigates the immensity of that affective surplus by swimming in it. Christian Lundberg in his new book *Lacan in Public* theorizes that when one “speaks in public, one primarily serves as both addressor and addressee, only engaging the others in speech that is presumably aimed by indirection or, in the register of tropology, by turning toward them.”<sup>141</sup> Thus, if one constantly attends to the turn through an economy of affect by continually facilitating the heightened circulation of tropes, one can be both critical and constructive. Publics theory can provide a necessary function, to theorize the mechanisms by which publics turn towards themselves. Rendered thus, neoliberalism also can be turned towards itself and in doing so begin to come to terms with the essential identity crisis at the heart of Reich’s style and practice: the consumer and the citizen. With Reich we have what may be the opening publics and public theories need to outpace neoliberal hegemony through the multimodal affective labor of an economic public intellectual.

## CHAPTER 5

### *Conclusion*

This study has looked at three figures, Saul Alinsky, Noam Chomsky, and Robert Reich to contribute to our understanding of the public intellectual. Upon entering this study we saw a great debate, still ongoing, as to what the function of the public intellectual was, is, and should be. In attending to that debate, this study theorized two distinct absences from the conversation: the publics themselves and the style that made possible the engagements between intellectuals and publics. These three figures were chosen because of their unique styles and their unique publics. Each case study presents what I see as three dominant public intellectual styles. These three styles, as we saw in the last chapter, are not discrete entities anymore (if they ever were). We described what we called rhetorical interfaces – the stylistically rendered rhetorical apparatuses that allow or otherwise enable publics to engage with intellectuals. We then ended each chapter with the stakes of each style, and of the publics they create or engage (and at times the two happen simultaneously) to see what are the possible configurations of public intellectuals. We have, in short, attended to the how of public intellectual practice.

Chapter 1 began with an analysis of the Back of the Yards community as it was at the time of Alinsky's engagements with it. We saw that the Back of the Yards was not a single community, but a conglomeration of competing desires squeezed into a

community model. We then performed a close read of Alinsky's two major publications, *Reveille for Radicals* and *Rules for Radicals*. From this reading, we gathered a set of precepts that constitute a distinct style: mobilization of customs and culture, empowering natural leaders, community maieutics, faith in the demos, and submersion. We then drew this style into a lineage with Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci and in doing so found a particular rhetorical interface that mediates the relationship between what we called the vanguard style and communities. That is, by framing a style that operates from community, communities connect with public intellectual practice as a means to becoming public. Communities form the base and then work themselves into publicness through style and by calling upon the intellectual production mediated through style. Finally, we deployed the publics theory of publicity to conceptualize this becoming-public not as a derivative form of social humanism but as a deployable medium for channeling social kinetic energy. Through the vanguard, publics move continually towards becoming more public. Each and every public is thus a radical alongside Alinsky not because they follow his content, but because they take the gamble of community as their impetus for engagement.

In chapter 2 we looked at the 1980s from the vantage point of the rhetorical exigency of the Reagan administration. We conceptualized the rhetorical climate as one of responsiveness, in that everyone had to in some way respond to Reagan and his style. Noam Chomsky responded to Reagan in a particular way that we dissected for a set of stylistic axioms. By placing the rhetorical climate of the 1980s writ large in conversation with Chomsky's works at the time, we drew the following stylistic components: de-



adornment, ethos through citation, repetition of truths, and public attentiveness at the level of power. These components comprise a style reminiscent of the *parrhesiastes* but distinct in that it invites a public to take up the same truth at the expense of action.

Chomsky's parrhesiatic style is a non-style, or at least a deferred one. Style is an aesthetic and rhetorical performance of culture, but by jettisoning performance in light of truth, Chomsky's style limits publics' ability to engage with him. To illustrate, we drew him into constellation with Immanuel Kant and Albert Camus, who perform the role of the *parrhesiastes* at two extremes of which Chomsky is the middle. We ultimately determined that Chomsky's parrhesiatic style does not perform culture, but performs the culture that could be, the culture of truth. And because this culture of truth has no mechanism of interface with publics, publics are rendered as passive entities called upon by public intellectuals to take up their vision. Publics theory, via the conceptual metaphor of public screen, in spite of the bleak and passive publics of the parrhesiatic non-style, does offer a slight hope for breaking down political, cultural, and social barriers through the reflective practice of truth-seeking.

For our final chapter we looked at a contemporary public intellectual that best serves as a case study for contemporary public intellectual practice, Robert Reich. Our analysis began with two of Reich's publications, *Supercapitalism* and *Beyond Outrage*. By looking at how both texts reflect the socio-political movements (and how Reich's style changed from one to the other) we analyzed Reich's style as it adapted to the possibilities and movements of publics. His style moved from judiciousness, equitable, mindful of structure, and personable in *Supercapitalism*, a specifically contextual

rendering in *Beyond Outrage* deploying simplification, non-aggressive tenacity, brevity, and behavior-modeling. In lieu of drawing an ongoing stylistic negotiation into a constellation, as we did Alinsky and Chomsky, we instead ran Reich's style through a contemporary rhetorical debate over three competing functions and operations of the contemporary public intellectual. We discovered that Reich's multi-modal style is not so easily reduced to either the vanguard or the *parrhesiastes*, and instead operates at a variety of modalities including advocate, discourse contribution, and critic. Not satisfied, we strove to uncover what about Reich's style allows it to operate at a variety of levels without sacrificing rhetorical potency. We determined that by inhabiting a contentious co-productive tension, Reich is able to navigate the multi-modal demand of public intellectual practice. In doing so, Reich's style is not called upon by publics like Alinsky or a call down to publics like Chomsky, but instead makes available style as a deployable tool for public circulation. Ultimately, this circulation of style allows publics to interface with public intellectuals and vice versa through economic topoi. By talking about and through the economy, Reich's style can move as the market, the rhetorical economy, demands. We concluded with the possibility of a public intellectual style that works through affect toward a co-productive tension between intellectual labor and public practice.

We can understand these tensions best when we place them in conversation with not only other theories, but other modes and styles. The public intellectual today is no more or less bound by certain expectations, and for that matter the question isn't particularly useful. What is of use is the act of theorizing contentiously within an

agonistic framework. That is, by theorizing public intellectuals' tensions along a variety of vectors, we can trace them back as modes of life and modes of intellectual engagement. So, to ask what we asked at the beginning of this long journey, how is the public intellectual doing? Each of the styles outlined and their corresponding rhetorical interfaces produced a variety of answers, but where complexity reigns, simplicity often reveals. The public intellectual is not a stable entity but a multi-modal negotiation.

We now have three distinct styles from which to draw and the theoretical conversations necessary to continue productively theorizing new forms of public intellectual engagement, but we are left with a problematic: How does attending to the public intellectual style get us anywhere but where we began, with no compass and a guiding star for each captain? In essence, as intellectuals of various stripes, be they rhetoricians or public intellectuals, continue to combine and experiment with a variety of theoretical networks, what justifies further production as anything but a lame substitution for real movement? I propose that as academics we can not only continue to cross disciplinary lines using the public intellectual as the *raison d'être* of our endeavors, but we can also work towards what Oslender spoke of when he described collective intellectuals with one exception. As we assemble and reassemble, we might take a cue from the public intellectual styles and interfaces and create new assemblages at both the theoretical and the institutional level with which to directly engage the circulation of public discourse. That is, we may take the demand of the public intellectual upon ourselves and say definitely that theory must go elsewhere if public intellectuals, publics, social scientists, civil servants, or academics are to create instead

of rearranging our prejudices. Each of these styles points us to publics as negotiations and leaves us with endless possibilities for recombination. As we continue to attend to new theories of publics and public intellectuals, we can add to this style tool-set, and in doing so create new avenues of life. We end then not with answers but with methods of attentiveness. We can build on not what we have or do not yet have, but on what we do and defer, what we reject and affirm. No less demanding but infinitely more productive, we can facilitate practice and purpose, intellect and action, without sacrificing the tension at the core of our engagements. We can be conduits for the communicative labor that our age so rightly demands.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> “U.S. Intellectual History”

<sup>2</sup> Simultaneously, a conference titled “Economists as Thinkers” was going on at Duke University.

<sup>3</sup> Posner, *Public Intellectuals*, 345.

<sup>4</sup> Etzioni, *Endangered Species*, 15.

<sup>5</sup> Posner, *Public Intellectuals*, 12, 25-33.

<sup>6</sup> Asen and Brouwer, *Public Modalities*, 22.

<sup>7</sup> Etzioni, *Endangered Species*, 23.

<sup>8</sup> Habermas, *Structural*, 112.

<sup>9</sup> For more on this see Asen and Brouwer’s *Public Modalities* Introduction.

<sup>10</sup> Asen and Brouwer, *Public Modalities*, 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 75.

<sup>13</sup> Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals*, 10.

<sup>14</sup> Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 26, 112, 189.

<sup>15</sup> Barret, “Local History and Social History,” 45.

<sup>16</sup> Sinclair, “What Life Means to Me,” 59.

<sup>17</sup> Horwitt, *Let Them Call Me*, 57.

<sup>18</sup> Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals*, 47.

<sup>19</sup> Alinsky, “Playboy Interview” 3.

<sup>20</sup> Slayton, *Back of the Yards*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-10.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>26</sup> Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals*, 19.

<sup>28</sup> Horwitt, *Let Them Call Me*, 216-218.

<sup>29</sup> Goldblatt, "Alinsky's Reveille," 281.

<sup>30</sup> Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals*, 64-75.

<sup>31</sup> Such reductions are common enough for Alinsky's legacy but for more of a specifically theoretical aspect see, Wilson, "Planning and Politics," 6; and Reitzes and Reitzes, "Alinsky," 265.

<sup>32</sup> For more nuance on this distinction between strategy and Tactics see, Certeau, *The Practice*, xix; and Sun Tzu, *Art of War*, 23.

<sup>33</sup> Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals*, 55. His emphasis.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 77-78.

<sup>35</sup> Bennett, *The Third City*, 28.

<sup>36</sup> Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals*, 116-119.

<sup>37</sup> Horwitt, *Let Them Call Me*, 18-30.

<sup>38</sup> Marx and Engels, *Manifesto*, 211.

<sup>39</sup> Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals*, 5-16.

<sup>40</sup> While I have been using the term "public intellectual" because it denotes a specific leaning in terms of practice, Marx and others would simply use the term intellectual or intelligentsia specifically because an intellectual was always in some way a public being.

<sup>41</sup> Marx and Engels, *Manifesto*, 215.

<sup>42</sup> Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals*, x-xii.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., xi.

<sup>44</sup> Avineri, "Marx and Intellectuals," 269.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 270.

<sup>46</sup> Haug, *Marx to Gramsci*, 69-82.

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<sup>47</sup> Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 134-145.

<sup>48</sup> Hariman, *Political Style*, 11.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>52</sup> For an expanded discussion of topoi as spatial metaphors within ancient thought, see, Muckelbauer, *Future of Invention*, 123-138.

<sup>53</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 81-91. Cite – also don't forget to put much ch. 7 pg 123 on topoi in the bib somewhere.

<sup>54</sup> Martin, *Other Eighties*, 14.

<sup>55</sup> While my meaning here is to my knowledge particular to this study, others have certainly attended to Reagan from a more policy oriented angle. For more on this see, Palmer & Sawhill, *Reagan Experiment*, 1-31.

<sup>56</sup> This is of course a gross over simplification of both the impact and effects of the Vietnam War. However, for the purposes of Chomsky, Vietnam's end marked an end to any substantive direct activism from him. As we will see, his style in the 1980s reflects none of the on-the-ground tactics of the 1960s and 1970s.

<sup>57</sup> Johnson, *Sleepwalking*, 24-30.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-40.

<sup>59</sup> Kuttner, *Laissez-Faire*, 262-280.

<sup>60</sup> Johnson, *Sleepwalking*, 215.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>63</sup> Martin, *Other Eighties*, xiv-xv.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-33.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-9.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-48, 50-57.

<sup>67</sup> Jaskela, *Intellectual Identity*, 85-94. See also Boyte, "Civic Agency," 1-7.

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<sup>68</sup> A simple internet search will turn up Chomsky's name in the top five of most "intellectuals" list. The publications are too numerous to list here but Foreign Policy's "Top 100 Global Thinkers" is a case in point.

<sup>69</sup> Chomsky and Herman, *Manufacturing*, 28.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.

<sup>71</sup> Chomsky, *Necessary*, 38.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-17.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, 33, 61, 101, 113, 233, 245, 251, 332, 333, 357; and Chomsky, *Detering*, 76, 93-96, 120, 136, 203, 296, 306, 394. These are, in fact, only a few examples.

<sup>74</sup> For example he habitually makes mention of news agencies that eschew the Propaganda model, the most current and notable of which would probably be Democracy Now!

<sup>75</sup> Barsky, *Chomsky Effect*, 14-16, 34-38.

<sup>76</sup> Chomsky and Foucault, *Human Nature*, 44-45. This marks a much more nuanced account of the intellectual's role and function for Chomsky; as opposed to his more well-known accounting of the intellectual in his 1966 article "The Responsibility of Intellectuals" in which he describes the intellectual's responsibility as, "to speak the truth and to expose lies. This, at least, may seem enough of a truism to pass without comment."

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>78</sup> Nigel, "Noam Chomsky Interview."

<sup>79</sup> Foucault, *Courage*, 13-14, 24-25, 58.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 89-93. It is also worth noting that this model of parrhesia is specific to the philosophical model best exemplified by Socrates.

<sup>81</sup> Kant, "Enlightenment," 60.

<sup>82</sup> McCormick, *Letters to Power*, 18.

<sup>83</sup> Zaretsky, *Camus A Life*, 20-29.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-10.

<sup>85</sup> Aronson, *Camus and Sartre*, 149.

<sup>86</sup> Camus, "Create Dangerously," 267-268.

<sup>87</sup> Warner, *Publics*, 67.

<sup>88</sup> Specifically I am referring to the interpretation of Hamlet's famous indecision as done by Friedrich Nietzsche in his book *The Birth of Tragedy* in which he states: "In this sense the Dionysian man resembles Hamlet: both have once looked truly into the essence of things, they have gained knowledge, and nausea



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inhibits action; for their action could not change anything in the eternal nature of things; they feel it to be ridiculous or humiliating that they should be asked to set right a world that is out of joint. Knowledge kills action; action requires the veils of illusion: that is the doctrine of Hamlet, not that cheap wisdom of Jack the Dreamer who reflects too much and, as it were, from an excess of possibilities does not get around to action." Nietzsche, *Tragedy*, 60.

<sup>89</sup> McGuigan, "Cultural Public Sphere," 431.

<sup>90</sup> Asen and Brouwer, *Public Modalities*, 11-13.

<sup>91</sup> Reich, 92Y Interview.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Reich, *Supercapitalism*, 13-14.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. 88.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 88-90, 95-103.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 55, 80.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>101</sup> Reich, *Beyond Outrage*, Dedication.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 13-15.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 86-89.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 43-44.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 114.

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<sup>112</sup> Expound on Eunoia and Aristotle in general after revisions.

<sup>113</sup> Reich, *Beyond Outrage*, 114.

<sup>114</sup> Fuller, "Agent of Justice," 149.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>116</sup> Crick, "Rhetoric," 136.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>121</sup> For the best example of such forums in terms of covering a wide spectrum of contributors and angels, see the forum "The Future of the Public Intellectual" found in, Bowditch and Etzioni, *Public Intellectuals*, 51-68.

<sup>122</sup> Welsh, "Coming to Terms," 3.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>127</sup> For the most telling example of this peculiar analogy, see Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous piece of oratory *Self Reliance*.

<sup>128</sup> Said, "The Public Role," 36.

<sup>129</sup> Oslender, "Resurfacing," 108.

<sup>130</sup> This is also part of a larger transition in Bourdieu's work. The local intellectual is part of an engagement with Foucault's specific intellectual. For more on this see, Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance*.

<sup>131</sup> Reich, *Beyond Outrage*, 136-137.

<sup>132</sup> Posner, *Public Intellectuals*, 48-50.

<sup>133</sup> Greene, "Rhetoric and Capitalism," 201.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

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<sup>135</sup> Chaput, "Rhetorical Circulation," 5.

<sup>136</sup> Greene, "Rhetoric and Capitalism," 203-204.

<sup>137</sup> Chaput, "Rhetorical Circulation," 5

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>141</sup> Lundberg, *Lacan in Public*, 128.

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